

# **CHINA AND HER NEIGHBOURS**

From  
Ancient  
Times  
To the Middle  
Ages



Progress Publishers  
Moscow

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From  
Ancient  
Times  
To the Middle  
Ages

*A Collection  
of Essays*



Progress Publishers  
Moscow

Translated from the Russian by *Liv Tudge*

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**"КИТАЙ И СОСЕДИ  
В ДРЕВНОСТИ И СРЕДНЕВЕКОВЬЕ"**

*На английском языке*

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# CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
<i>S. L. Tikhvinsky</i>	
Introduction .....	7
<i>L. I. Duman</i>	
Ancient Chinese Foreign Policy and the Origins of the Tribute System .....	17
<i>L. I. Duman</i>	
Chinese Relations with the Xiongnu in the First to Third Centuries A. D. ....	43
<i>L. S. Perelomov</i>	
China and Vietnam from the Third Century B.C. to the Third Century A.D. ....	59
<i>I. N. Mashkina</i>	
Notes on Sino-Vietnamese Relations in the Third to Tenth Centuries A. D. (From Chinese Sources) ..	71
<i>A. A. Bokshchanin</i>	
Sino-Indian Relations from Ancient Times to the Sixteenth Century. ....	105
<i>A. A. Bokshchanin</i>	
A Brief Account of Chinese Relations with the Countries of the South Seas (from Ancient Times to the Sixteenth Century) .....	139
<i>A. S. Martynov</i>	
Notes on Trade in the Ming Era. ....	182
<i>G. V. Melikhov</i>	
Ming Policy Towards the Nüzhen (1402-1413) .....	200



## INTRODUCTION

The history of Chinese foreign relations has recently become the subject of a fierce ideological controversy within China. On several occasions Chinese writers have alleged China's 'historical right' to make territorial demands on neighbouring states or to interfere blatantly in their internal affairs. They ignore the class approach to history and instead look with chauvinist approval on all the deeds of ancient Chinese rulers—even those which set China and her neighbours back by centuries.

The vast expanses of East Asia now known as the People's Republic of China were not always part of Chinese territory. Three to four thousand years ago, the forefathers of the Chinese people occupied only a narrow strip of land in the central Huang Ho valley. By the middle of the second millennium B.C., a permanent agricultural settlement had been established there. The extant evidence suggests that relations between the Chinese and the numerous neighbouring tribes were violently hostile, especially in the case of the northern tribes, which mostly inhabited the areas that now constitute the Mongolian People's Republic and North-Eastern China (Manchuria).<sup>1</sup> It was in this conflict situation, during the Yin dynasty (14th to 11th centuries B.C.), that a system of diplomatic relations emerged, largely modelled on the links which already

<sup>1</sup> See *Materialy po istorii syunnu (po kitaiskim istochnikam)* [Xiongnu History From Chinese Sources], translated, with foreword and notes, by V. S. Taskin (Moscow, 1968), pp. 5-6.

existed between the central Chinese authorities and local Chinese rulers. A characteristic feature of this system was the assertion of the unlimited power of the Yin *wang*, the supreme ruler who was simultaneously the sole landowner and the nation's high priest, under whose supervision sacrifices were made to the dead and the nature spirits.

During the Zhou dynasty (11th to 3rd centuries B.C.) the *wang* took the title of 'Son of Heaven', thereby claiming the mandate of Heaven to rule all the lands under heaven, (the Celestial Empire). The ancient Chinese considered that the 'Son of Heaven' exercised unqualified sovereignty not only over the Chinese people but also over the 'barbarians'—that is, those peoples in distant lands who had no contact whatever with the Chinese language, or Chinese mores and whom the Chinese therefore believed to be ignorant of the most elementary concepts of culture and civilisation.

The names which the Chinese gave their country—*Zhongguo* (the Middle Kingdom) and *Tianxia* (the 'Celestial Empire')—admirably illustrate their view that China was the central point of creation. Even at the dawn of Chinese class society, the official ideology of the slave-owners judged the 'Celestial Empire' or 'the area within the bounds of the four seas' to include not only China itself but also all the non-Chinese territories, thus bringing them into the domain of the 'Son of Heaven'. Nothing could shake this attitude—not even the fact that the dependence of the non-Chinese tribes and peoples on the Yin and Zhou rulers was often purely nominal and that those peoples showed their scant regard for the 'Son of Heaven' by raiding Chinese territory. The ethical teachings of Confucius (551-479 B.C.) further encouraged the belief that the power of the *wang* (who took the title of Emperor following the establishment of the centralised Qin and Han empires) was of divine origin. A precise system of relationships between the 'Son of Heaven' and the rulers of outlying areas, the purpose of which was to regulate the delivery of tribute and the dispatch of ambassadors, was also formulated around this time.

This system, which defined the relations between the Chinese rulers and their subject tribes and peoples, was the foundation of ancient China's foreign policy. The rulers of

outlying areas declared their subjection to the Son of Heaven by sending tribute, in the form of local produce, by making personal visits to the royal court and by supplying manpower for the Yin and Zhou armies.

The rise of the Qin and, later, the Han empires was stimulated by the qualitative development of the productive forces during the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C. The discovery of iron smelting and the manufacture of iron agricultural implements gave farming a great boost, and the use of iron weapons increased China's military potential considerably. Chinese foreign policy during this period was aggressively expansionist: the Chinese conquest of Vietnam began under the Qin dynasty, with settlers following closely behind the invading armies. The colonisation policy widely practised by the Qin and Han dynasties and their successors, known as *canshi*—'the gradual consumption of neighbouring lands, much as the silkworm consumes leaves'—was nothing less than a policy of enforced assimilation of the local population, and was fiercely opposed by the indigenous peoples, especially the Vietnamese.

Qin and Han expansionism was not allowed to proceed unchecked on all the national borders. Initially the Han emperors were obliged to buy off Xiongnu, their northern neighbours, with costly gifts—tribute in all essentials but name—and from 198 B.C. the Xiongnu began to impose humiliating 'peace treaties based on kinship' on the Chinese, demanding the daughters of the Chinese emperors in marriage in addition to largesse. It was not until the reign of the Emperor Xuan-di (74-48 B.C.) that the Chinese, aided by nomad tribes subject to the Xiongnu, managed to defeat their northern rivals and launch a series of military campaigns against other peoples in the north and north-west. The Han dynasty formulated a foreign policy doctrine called *jimi*—'restraint', 'shackling'—whose major principle was the bestowal of generous gifts on foreign rulers.

A letter from Xuan-di to the Xiongnu ruler, dating from 52 B.C., gives a model formulation of the traditional idea that all countries and all nations should submit to the Chinese Empire: 'The Han rules with might and fidelity, is sovereign over all states [in the world]. All that live under the sun and the moon are his (the Emperor's—*editor*) servants. [In her relations with] many peoples with various

customs, [China] is just and makes no distinction between those which are close and those which are distant. She rewards the obedient and punishes the recalcitrant and rebellious.' Han diplomats made active recourse to the tactic of *yi yi zhi yi*—'to suppress barbarians by using other barbarians'—a method which the rulers of China had adopted in ancient times. The northern Xiongnu, for example, were decisively defeated in 85 A.D. by a coalition of tribes and peoples formed by Ban Chao, a Han diplomat.

The Han Empire also took an aggressive stance against Choson, the ancient Korean state which for several centuries firmly blocked Chinese expansion into the Korean peninsula. Choson fell to Chinese invading forces in 109 B.C. and was split into four regions directly dependent on the Han Emperor. But the Korean people continued to resist, and by 82 B.C. only one of those regions remained under Chinese control. Opposition to the invaders helped consolidate the ancient Korean peoples and ultimately brought into being the early feudal Korean states of Koguryo, Paekche and Silla.

It was during the Han period, too, that the first steps were made towards establishing relations with the states of Central Asia, India and Ceylon, which made greater headway during the Sui and Tang dynasties (late 6th century to early 9th century A.D.), when a united and centralised Chinese Empire emerged. As commercial and diplomatic links became increasingly active, the Chinese emperors took every opportunity to emphasise their alleged sovereignty over all other countries and peoples, hoping thereby to forestall any intentions of challenging that sovereignty. In general, foreign trade was publicly advertised as the delivery of tribute to the royal court, despite the fact that these exchanges were certainly not always advantageous to China. For instance, the Song dynasty (10th to 13th centuries A.D.) paid for the favour of the neighbouring Tanggute, Qidan and Nüzhen by sending them, as 'reciprocal gifts', silks, wines and other goods whose value exceeded that of the original 'gifts' hundreds, or even thousands, of times over.

Following the Mongol conquest, when China was part of the huge Mongol Empire, relations with Central Asia and Asia Minor began to flourish. At the beginning of the Ming

dynasty (1368-1644), the collapse of the overland caravan trade with the west prompted the Chinese rulers to turn their attention to the expansion of the sea trade with South-East Asia. The Chinese fleet under Zheng He made seven extended military and commercial explorations in the early 15th century, visiting the Philippines, Indonesia, various Indian states, Ceylon and the Maldives, and even reaching as far as the Persian Gulf and the African coast. However, as these expeditions were not followed up, the only palpable gains to the Imperial court were the curious products, artefacts and live fauna brought from those distant lands.

An important aspect of Chinese diplomatic links with South-East Asia from the 5th century was the obligation laid upon local rulers to send written communications to the Chinese Emperor. Modern research has established that the Chinese courtiers who translated these missives freely inserted various expressions of compliance and submission, along with eulogies and flattering epithets directed at the Emperor's person. Yet, despite these falsifications and all other means by which the Chinese rulers tried to present the states of South-East and Southern Asia as their tributaries, those countries remained completely independent, and pursued their political, commercial and cultural relations with China exclusively in their own interests.

Before beginning their commercial and military penetration into South-East Asia, the Ming emperors organised several large-scale military operations against the Mongol feudal lords, aimed at smashing their military might, preventing the restoration of the Yuan dynasty (founded by the Mongol Kublai Khan—*trans.*) and removing the constant threat against Peking, the Empire's northern capital. The insecurity of Peking had previously forced the Ming emperors to rule from Nanking, further to the south. By the end of the 14th century, following these military expeditions against the Mongols, China's northern border was fixed approximately along the line of the Great Wall, a line once held by the Qin, the first Chinese Empire. Later attacks on the Mongols, during the 1420s, were less successful.

In their campaign against the Mongol pretenders to the Imperial throne, the Ming rulers tried to recruit allies among the Mongol and Tibetan feudal lords and the war-lords of various Nüzhen tribes through trade, diplomacy



and outright bribery.

As part of a lengthy but abortive drive to subordinate the Nüzhen tribes, who inhabited what is now Manchuria and Primorye Territory, the Ming emperors sent out military and commercial expeditions and diplomatic embassies similar to Zheng He's forays into South-East and Southern Asia. In 1411, one such mission, headed by Yishiha and equipped with 26 large ships, entered the lower reaches of the Amur River, some 100 kilometres from its mouth, and announced that the local tribes would henceforth form part of the so-called Nurgan *wei* (government). All power in this, as in the other Nüzhen *weis* created by the Ming dynasty, was to remain in the hands of the local Nüzhen warlords, who were also awarded honorary titles and received fine gifts from the emperors. No Chinese troops were posted on their territory and no permanent Ming officials were imposed on them. Yishiha made three more expeditions in the area (in 1413, 1427 and 1432), but contacts with the Ming Empire lapsed as the Nüzhen became more independent, and the costly missions were called off. The Nüzhen chieftains had accepted the titles and splendid gifts but had used their trips to Peking with their symbolic 'tribute' as opportunities to pillage the Chinese people as well as to barter with them. The Ming diplomats, applying the traditional *jimi* policy, had divided the Nüzhen tribes into over 350 independent *weis* and had deliberately set the tribes and their leaders at each other's throats, on the grounds that 'internal wars among the barbarians are beneficial to China'; yet by the end of the 16th century, the Nüzhen, led by Nurkhatsi had established their own early feudal state in what is now Southern Manchuria. And in 1644 they took Peking, overthrew the Ming dynasty and set the Manchurian Qing dynasty on the Imperial throne.

Thomas Pereira, a Portuguese missionary who spent 17 years in the Qing Empire and held several high government posts, was well placed to observe the foreign policy of China's new rulers in action. In 1670 he wrote in his diary: 'The Tartars (the name given by the Chinese to the Manchurian invaders—*auth.*'), however, were ... completely under the influence of Chinese customs. From the beginning of the world, China had never received foreigners in its Empire except as tribute bearers. In their crass ignorance of the

world, the Tartars, with the same pride as the Chinese, considered all other nations shepherds like their neighbours. They thought everything was part of the China which they called proudly T'ien-hsia [Tianxia—*trans.*], that is to say "all under the heaven", as if nothing else but it existed.<sup>1</sup>

The Qing government, first established its position within China by dreadfully violent means, then took up an aggressive and expansionist stance against its neighbours. All the Mongol princedoms, East Turkestan, Tibet and the Oirat state of Dzhungaria fell before the bloody onslaught of the Manchurian-Chinese feudal lords. The Qings also went out to conquer the Russian settlements along the Amur, and the peoples of Burma, Nepal and Vietnam. And yet in the mid-19th century they ignominiously capitulated to England and France and at the end of the century were defeated by Japan, which had recently begun the transition to the capitalist stage of development.

The new social forces—the bourgeoisie and landlords—which emerged in China about that time were by 1912 in a position to overthrow the Qings and set up the bourgeois Chinese Republic. China's new leaders, warlords of various stripe, from Yuan Shi-kai to Jiang Jie-shi, represented the Chinese feudal lords and compradore bourgeoisie, served the foreign imperialist powers heart and soul and were therefore in no way able to defend the national interests of the Chinese people or the other peoples within the Republic. They had, however, inherited in full measure the Qings' chauvinist attitude to the non-Chinese peoples—the Mongols, the Uigurs, the Kazakhs, the Dungans, the Tibetans, etc.—which had been forcibly incorporated into the Qing Empire. The warlord regimes were weak and totally dependent on the imperialist powers, yet they not only pursued an exceedingly reactionary internal policy but also took an active part in the imperialist anti-Soviet intervention in the Far East and Siberia during the Civil War, crushed the national liberation movement in Outer Mongolia and provoked armed clashes on the Soviet Union's Far Eastern frontier in 1929.

Following the victorious revolution, on 30 September

<sup>1</sup> J. Sebes, *The Jesuits and the Sino-Russian Treaty of Nerchinsk (1689). The Diary of Thomas Pereira* (Rome, 1961), p. 207.

1949, the first session of the People's Political Consultative Conference published a declaration announcing the inauguration of the People's Republic of China. In its description of the central government, the declaration stated: 'This government, united with all peace-loving and freedom-loving countries, nations and peoples, united above all with the Soviet Union, the new democratic countries and their allies, will put up a common front against imperialist plots designed to foment war, and will campaign for a durable peace throughout the world.'<sup>1</sup>

These principles were subsequently incorporated into the first constitution of the PRC. However, the Maoist leadership gradually deviated from the principles of foreign policy agreed between the socialist countries. Chinese political commentators began a deliberate drive to belittle the significance of alliance and friendship with the USSR and to condone nationalist attitudes, and in 1957 right-wing elements of the bourgeoisie led anti-socialist, Chinese chauvinist demonstrations.<sup>2</sup> The overwhelming majority of the Chinese Communist Party's leaders, firmly based on Marxist-Leninist internationalism, wasted no time in encouraging the Party to combat the great-power, Han nationalist tendencies which had arisen within the country and the Party itself.

In 1956, a resolution of the Eighth National Congress of the Communist Party of China on the Political Report of the Central Committee, accepted unanimously, emphasised the need 'to educate our personnel, in all their contacts with foreign countries and their people, to treat others on a really equal footing, and strictly to oppose great-nation chauvinism'.<sup>3</sup>

On 1 November 1956, the Chinese Government de-

<sup>1</sup> *Obrazovanie KNR. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* [The Emergence of the PRC. A Collection of Documents and Factual Materials], (Moscow, 1950), p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> O. Borisov, B. Koloskov, 'Politika Sovetskogo Soyuza v otnoshenii KNR—sotsialisticheskii internatsionalizm v deistvii' [Soviet Policy and the PRC—Socialist Internationalism in Action] in *Leninskaya politika SSSR v otnoshenii Kitaya* [The Leninist Policy of the USSR Towards China], (Moscow, 1968), p. 172.

<sup>3</sup> *Eighth National Congress of the Communist Party of China*, Vol. I, Documents (Peking, 1956), p. 131.

clared: 'In view of the ideological unity of the socialist states and the common goals they pursue, our cadres often find it too easy to disregard the principle that all states have equal rights in their mutual dealings. This error is essentially prompted by bourgeois chauvinist attitudes. This error, especially when it takes the form of great-power chauvinism, seriously impairs the solidarity and common aim of the socialist states. Therefore, the leaders and cadres of our Government and all our people should be constantly vigilant so as to avert errors of a chauvinistic type in relations with the socialist states and other countries. We should constantly instill into our workers and all the people of China the need to combat great-power chauvinism with the utmost determination. If this error occurs, it must be corrected with all speed. This is a duty which warrants our due attention if we are to achieve peaceful coexistence with all countries and further the cause of peace throughout the world.'<sup>1</sup>

In December 1956, an editorial in *Renmin ribao* commented: 'We Chinese should be careful not to forget that during the Han, Tang, Ming and Qing dynasties our country was a great empire. Yet, for more or less a hundred years, from the latter half of the 19th century, our country, having succumbed to armed aggression, was transformed into a semi-colony. Our state is as yet economically and culturally underdeveloped; but conditions will change, and then a tendency to great-power chauvinism will become a serious danger if all efforts are not made to avert it. We should say, however, that the behaviour of certain of our government cadres makes it clear that this danger is already with us. Therefore the Communist Party of China, in its resolution passed at the Eighth National Congress, and the Government of the People's Republic of China, in its declaration of 1 November 1956, have presented our cadres with the task of combating the tendency to great-power chauvinism.' But later Mao Tse-tung usurped power within the CPC leadership and proceeded to cripple the Party's internationalist core and set aside the decisions of the Eighth Congress. China advanced territorial claims to areas

<sup>1</sup> *Izvestiya*, 2 November 1956; *Sovetsko-kitaishkiye otnosheniya* [Sino-Soviet Relations], (Moscow, 1959), p. 322.

belonging to the USSR, the Mongolian People's Republic, India and other countries, and Chinese writers began to present the aggressive military campaigns of the Chinese emperors in a most favourable light. Gengis Khan and Kangxi, the two bloody conquerors of China and other lands, suddenly became great heroes.

This collection of essays covers various aspects of the relations between China and her neighbours from ancient times to the Middle Ages, traces the development of Chinese approaches to foreign policy and concretely illustrates Chinese attitudes towards neighbouring states. The contributors, all of whom are leading experts in their field, make wide use of original sources and support their conclusions with meticulous documentation. The clear picture of the great-power traditions of Chinese diplomacy throughout the given period shows that the nationalism typical of the contemporary Chinese leadership has ancient roots. Other general conclusions that may be drawn are that nationalism and Sinocentrism are characteristic features of the feudal, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologies and of Chinese utopian peasant socialism, and that the feudal state employed Confucianism to suppress the sense of ethnic community, which encouraged the Chinese people to consider themselves, their philosophy and culture as exceptional, to adopt a conformist attitude with regard to their own conservative traditions.

The foreign policy formulated in Peking today—the heir of the ancient diplomatic traditions discussed in this book—should be seen in conjunction with the unrestrained militarisation of China, the continuation of nuclear tests which poison the earth's atmosphere, aggressive incursions into India and, more recently, Vietnam, demonstrations of armed might against Japan in the East China Sea and, last but not least, armed provocations on the Sino-Soviet and Sino-Mongolian borders. This leaves world public opinion in no doubt whatever that the Chinese urge to great-power hegemony is a threat not only to her immediate neighbours but to all peace-loving nations and peoples.

*S. L. Tikhvinsky*



**ANCIENT CHINESE FOREIGN  
POLICY AND THE ORIGINS  
OF THE TRIBUTE SYSTEM**

Since its emergence over 3,000 years ago, the Chinese state has been in constant contact with neighbouring peoples. Those contacts sometimes took the form of barter with the stock-breeding tribes, or exchange of cultural influences, but were also often military. The Chinese organised excursions to capture slaves or to occupy more territory, as the state expanded, especially in the north and north-west, and to a certain extent in the north-east.

By the 3rd century B.C., the Qin Empire, the first strong centralised Chinese state, was pursuing an actively expansionist policy in the north and south. Yet China had been using military force to extend her borders as early as the 2nd millennium B.C., in the Yin era (14th to 11th centuries B.C.). Unfortunately, the records of the Yin period—inscriptions on bone, on tortoise shell and on bronze artefact—are terse in the extreme and present but a sketchy picture of contemporary events. Nevertheless, these inscriptions, though fragmentary and largely connected with oracular rituals, do give us some impression of the relationships between China and her neighbours, of the wars she waged against them, the tribute she imposed and of the way in which she enslaved certain of them.

The Yin inscriptions establish beyond doubt that during the emergence of the early Chinese state the Yin rulers were actively expanding their borders, and clashing directly with the Fang, Tufang, and Gongfang (or Qunfang) tribes in the area now occupied by the province of Shanxi. Our earliest information on this in the Yin inscriptions dates from the

reign of Wu Ding (1324-1265 B.C. according to traditional reckoning, 1238-1180 following the new style)<sup>1</sup> [16, 61-67]. We believe that Liu Xue-qin, a Chinese scholar, is incorrect in holding that the Tufang and Gongfang were relatively weak tribes, that their incursions into Yin territory were limited in scale and that Wu Ding, consequently, took little account of the raids and put up no serious resistance to them [v. 16, 61-67]. To counter these views we need cite only the fact that in the course of a 38-day operation against the Gongfang alone Wu Ding mobilised 23,000 men [18, 84].

The Yin also fought numerous other tribes, as we see from records of Chinese victories over invading tribes and of attempts to divine whether a certain tribe harboured ill-will towards the Chinese state or not. Studying the bone and tortoise-shell inscriptions, and other Chinese sources, we note especially the references to wars against the Guifang<sup>2</sup> and Weifang. Both tribes, apparently, inhabited the south-west section of present-day Shanxi province [v. 16, 75]. The *Yijing* tells us that a war against the Guifang, which ended in victory for Gao-zong (Wu Ding) [v. 15, juan 6, 11a], lasted for three years—and this gives some idea of the strength of that tribe. The scale of these military operations is also indicated in the record of campaigns against the Weifang. On one occasion Di Yi, the Yin ruler (1191-1155 or 1084-1060 B.C.), was accompanied by a xiao-chen of the Qiang. The leader of the Weifang was captured, along with '20 men, and 4 more, and 1,577 [people] of the Er tribe ... two chariots, 180 (symbol not deciphered—*auth.*), 50 suits of armour, (symbol unclear—*auth.*) arrows' [23, vol. 3, 562, no. 915].

This inscription gives an approximate idea of the size of the tribes which attacked Yin China and shows that the

<sup>1</sup> The old and new style of dating will henceforth be given without comment.

<sup>2</sup> Wang Guowei believes that the Guifang, the Xiongnu and the Xianyun are but various names for one tribe [v. 6, juan 13, 592, 593]—the ancestors of the Xiongnu, who are first mentioned by name in the Zhanguo period (5th to 3rd centuries B.C.) [v. 6, juan 13, 606]. This is further substantiated by the *Suoyin* commentary to Sima Qian's *Shi ji*: 'Under the Yins they were called Guifang, under the Zhou—Xianyun and under the Han—Xiongnu' [20, juan 1, 4/1].

Weifang and their allies also possessed war chariots.

The wars against the Qiang tribe, conducted with varying success from the reign of Wu Ding until the Yin state ceased to exist (in the time of Di Xin), were both more extensive and more costly in terms of lives. Wu Ding once mustered 13,000 men for a campaign against them.<sup>1</sup> The Qiang retained their independence despite the defeats they suffered at Chinese hands, although they became tributaries to the Yin rulers for a certain period and many of them were enslaved or offered as sacrifice to the Yin ancestors [v. 13, 12-13]. The inscriptions sometimes record that 'many' Qiang tribesmen were taken and sometimes indicate the actual number of prisoners.

The Yin rulers also conducted lengthy and bloody campaigns against other tribes. Di Yi, for example, fought the Renfang<sup>2</sup> in the 10th and 15th years of his reign (1075 and 1070 B.C. respectively); the 1075 campaign lasted for seven months [16, 40-41]<sup>3</sup>. As a result of these wars the Yin state expanded and amassed new tributaries and dependent domains.

There is no doubt that from the 14th to the 11th centuries B.C. certain neighbouring peoples were subject to the Yin rulers and expressed their subordinate condition by delivering tribute, by making courtesy visits to the Yin court and by supplying manpower for Yin campaigns against other tribes. Evidence of this is found in numerous Yin inscriptions such as the following: 'On the day under the cyclical signs of *jiachen* they were soothsaying. The soothsayer Qiao asked: "Will the Xi [tribe] send white horses?" The *Wang* replied: "Success is on our side. They sent five horses"' [13, No. 3449]. The Xi, evidently a stock-breeding tribe, also sent oxen as tribute [v. 7, 144].

The Yin inscriptions also tell us that the ruler of the

<sup>1</sup> 'On the day under the cyclical signs of *xinsi*, they asked the following question: "Fu Hao has 3,000 [men] under arms, Lu has 10,000. Should we now proceed to attack the Qiang?"' (The Cowling-Chalfont Collection, No. 310) [quoted from 36, 23].

<sup>2</sup> Contemporary Chinese scholars assert that the Renfang lived in what is now Shaanxi province.

<sup>3</sup> We support Liu Xue qin's refutation of Dong Zuobin's and Cheng Mengjia's claims that the campaigns against the Renfang took place in the reign of Di Xin (1154-1122 or 1060 (1050)-1027 B.C.).

Quan tribe, who bore the title of *hou* after his subjugation to the Yin *wang*, helped the Yin in the attacks on the Zhou tribe. Luo Zhenyu cites the following inscriptions: 'The questioners asked: "[If] the *do zi zu* are ordered to attack the Zhou along with the *hou* of the Quan [tribe], will they fulfill the wishes of the *wang*?"' [quoted from 24, 45b].

The inscriptions contain extensive detail on the tribute sent to the Yin rulers: Hu Houxuan states that 29 tribes and areas were registered as tributaries during the reign of Wu Ding. It is worth noting, however, that the inscriptions do not contain the concept of tribute as such: it is indicated by use of the verbs 'to send', 'to arrive', and 'to deliver', which refer to the tribute offered by the rulers of domains within Chinese territory as well as by dependent tribes.

We know from the inscriptions that tribes previously hostile to the Yin state sometimes sent their former allies as tribute. For example, the Long (Dragon) tribe, previously allied with the Qiang in opposition to Wu Ding,<sup>1</sup> surrendered to the Yin *wang* and sent Qiang prisoners to him: 'The Long have sent the Qiang' [quoted from 30, 283].

The Yin *wangs* sometimes bestowed titles on the chieftains in order to emphasise the subjection of the latter; this we know from certain extremely laconic inscriptions, such as: 'It was willed [to be] the *hou*<sup>2</sup> [in] Zhou' [14, no. 446; 24, 6, 1]. The Quan leader also received the title of *hou* after his surrender to the Yin state [24, 60]. The bestowal of titles, however, was a purely formal act which did not always signify real dependence on the Yin rulers.

We may assume that one of the duties of the administrators of Yin domains and of the leaders of subject tribes was to make periodic visits to the Yin court. We have unfortunately found no direct reference to courtesy visits by rulers of dependent tribes or domains, although several inscriptions mention audiences given to the rulers of Yin

<sup>1</sup> This is proved by identical inscriptions found in various collections: 'Shall we punish the Qiang and Long?' [16, 80; 30, 283].

<sup>2</sup> The title of *hou*, which was widely used in the Yin era, was given to representatives of the royal household, to regional rulers and the rulers of allied tribes and domains.

domains. We read of a visit from a *xiaochen*,<sup>1</sup> and a certain Fou was discussed in the following terms: 'On the day under the cyclical signs of *ji-wei* the soothsayer Qiao asked: "Will Fou seek an audience with the *wang*?"' The first moon.' 'On the day under the cyclical signs of *ji-wei* they were soothsaying. The soothsayer Qiao asked: "Will Fou not appear for an audience with the *wang*?"' [13, 5393; 30, 505].<sup>2</sup> Visitors to the Yin court usually brought gifts for the *wang*, who would then make a return presentation.

An inscription on a bronze vessel dating from the late Yin period records the visit of a royal kinswoman who was also a ruler of one of the Yin domains.<sup>3</sup> 'Yainü came to the *wang*'s court. On the day under the cyclic sign of *gui* (that is at the end of the ten-day period—*auth.*) the *wang* presented her with two links of shells. A sacrificial vessel was made in honour of Yainü's mother' [5, 148, no. 92].

Sources from the post-Yin period make it quite clear that a ritual appearance at court was also demanded of the chieftains. A poem from the *Shi Jing*, for example, describes the relations between the Shang-Yin state and its neighbours:

You, the people who live in this kingdom Jing-Chu,  
You live to the south. Now I say this to you:  
Since the ancient days when Cheng-tang ruled our land  
None of the leaders of the distant Di-Qiang<sup>4</sup>  
Would dare not to come bringing tribute, all sure  
That this custom was Shang's and would ever endure.  
[14, 465; 34, juan 20, 22b]

The *Shi Jing* and other literary and historical sources of the Zhou period (11th to 3rd centuries B.C.) indicate that the tribal leaders were sending tribute and making ritu-

<sup>1</sup> Xiaochen was another Yin title. The name of this one is indecipherable [v. 14, no. 3913; 30, 505].

<sup>2</sup> This inscription relates to Wu Ding's reign. Cheng Mengjia, who read it incorrectly, was corrected by Li Xueqin [v. 17, 127].

<sup>3</sup> The first two characters of this text are illegible. The character indicating the name is given as *yai* in the ancient Chinese dictionary *Shuowen*.

<sup>4</sup> Tribes which lived in what is now Gansu and Qinghai (Koko-nor).



al visits as early as the reign of Cheng Tang (circa 1600-1587 B.C., or 1766-1753 B.C. on the old system), but we unfortunately possess no inscriptions dating from that time. As the oldest extant Yin inscriptions belong to the 13th century B.C.—to the reign of Wu Ding—we can make no unquestionable assertions about the preceding period, especially in view of the fact that the events took place some 1,000 years before our earliest sources recorded them. However, since the names of Cheng Tang and other rulers of the early Shang period are found in the Yin inscriptions, we can assume that the references to their deeds in later sources may be taken seriously by a reasonably circumspect scholar. For example, the poem from the *Shi Jing* quoted above concurs with Yin inscriptions referring to Qiang tributaries, although those references relate to a considerably later period. The songs of the *Shi Jing*, however, warrant our confidence—especially when corroborated by other sources—simply because they are part of the folk tradition, pasted down from generation to generation. A book compiled by Zhu Yuezeng, probably in the Zhanguo period (5th to 3rd centuries B.C.) or in the period of the Western Han (3rd century B.C. to 1st century A.D.), considers in some detail the tributaries of the Shang ruler Cheng Tang, in the form of a dialogue with his chief adviser, Yi Yin. ‘Tang (i.e., Cheng Tang—*auth.*) questioned Yi Yin, and then said: “When the rulers of the domains<sup>1</sup> bring tribute they sometimes, having no horses or livestock, offer objects from distant countries. This fact is indeed unnatural (literally: contradictory—*auth.*) and inauspicious. Henceforth I wish them to offer [as tribute] those things which they have in their possessions, that must be easy and inexpensive to obtain. This is my directive on tribute for all the domains (literally: the four countries of the world)’ [27, juan 7, 122].

It is interesting to note that the principle of compiling tribute from locally-obtainable goods, which, according to the Chinese sources, was established in the 16th century B.C., was upheld for 3,500 years.

<sup>1</sup> The Chinese term is *zhuhou*, a title accorded from the Yin period to both the rulers of Chinese domains and the rulers of dependent domains and tribes.

This document goes on to state that Yi Yin, on Cheng Tang's orders, formulated a detailed set of rules relating to the tribute to be offered by 'the four countries of the world'—*sifang*—that is, the tribes of the north, south, east and west [v. 27, juan 7, 122-124].

If the names of the tributary domains and tribes mentioned in this document are placed in their contemporary geographical context, it becomes clear that there has been considerable falsification, for Cheng Tang is attributed with such influence over distant peoples as could not possibly have any foundation in fact. More specifically, it is claimed that tribute came from the east, paid by tribes such as the Fulou and the Yilu, which the book's commentator, basing himself on the *Hou Han shu*, identifies as the Fuyu and the Yilou (the ancestors of the Sushen), who in those ancient times occupied the area that is now north-eastern China. 'Tribute' from the south was, according to Zhu Yuzeng, offered by the domains of Oudeng,<sup>1</sup> Changli,<sup>2</sup> Bopu,<sup>3</sup> and Jiuju;<sup>4</sup> from the west by the domains of Kunlun,<sup>5</sup> Gouguo,<sup>6</sup> Guiqin,<sup>7</sup> Zhisi,<sup>8</sup> and other minor domains whose names appear in Chinese sources with no further information. Finally, it is stated, tribute was paid by the northern

<sup>1</sup> The commentator identifies Oudeng as the present-day province of Guangdong [v. 27, 123].

<sup>2</sup> Changli or Cheli was within the present-day province of Yunnan [v. 27, 123].

<sup>3</sup> Bopu was also in Yunnan [v. 27, 123].

<sup>4</sup> The commentator maintains that Jiuju was Jiuzhen, a district which during the Han era was within the present-day Vietnam [27, 123].

<sup>5</sup> Kunlun is thought to have been beyond the border to the west of Xining, in the present-day province of Qinghai. Wang Yinglin (1223-1296) cites the opinion of Wang Su (195-256) that Kunlun was to the west of Linqiang in the same province [27, 123].

<sup>6</sup> The commentator associates Gouguo with the Quanrong [v. 27, 123]; this was the name given during the *Chunqiu* period (8th to 5th centuries B.C.) to the Yiguo, the Quanyi and the Kunyi, peoples which ancient Chinese tradition holds to be the descendants of the legendary Huangdi. They occupied an area within the present-day province of Shaanxi [v. 26, p. 171].

<sup>7</sup> The commentator associates Guiqin with the Guifang [v. 27, 123], a tribe mentioned previously in this essay.

<sup>8</sup> The commentator identifies Zhisi with Zhi, a domain of the Zhanguo period, which was within the present-day province of Sichuan, in the Peizhou region [v. 27, 123; 26, 628].

domains of Daxia,<sup>1</sup> Shache,<sup>2</sup> and Luofan,<sup>3</sup> and tribes such as the Xiongnu and the Yuezhi.<sup>4</sup>

The information given above, then, indicates that as early as the reign of Cheng Tang (circa 1600-1587 B.C.), the Shangci, the distant forebears of the Chinese people, had extended their influence to the south and south-west, into the areas now occupied by Guangdong and Yunnan provinces and by Vietnam; to the east, into present-day north-east China; to the north-west, into the present-day Shaanxi and Gansu provinces; to the west into Qinghai, Sichuan, the Sinkiang Uigur Autonomous Region and far beyond; and to the north into the present-day Shanxi province. But this could not possibly have held true for any period prior to the Western Han (206 B.C. to 8 A.D.), when the Chinese frontiers and Chinese influence did indeed embrace some of those territories. A close analysis of the Yin inscriptions dating from Wu Ding's reign—when the Yin state was at its peak—and the reign of Di Yi, when the Yin frontiers expanded, convinces us that Yin political influence had not extended at that time beyond present-day Shanxi province

<sup>1</sup> Wang Yinglin holds that Daxia was in the 'Western lands' [v. 27, 124]. *Zhongguo gujin di ming da cidian* mentions Daxia as a state which covered the area of present-day Ningxia and Ordos in the 5th century B.C. and as Xixia, an 11th-century state founded by Li Yuanhao [v. 26, 69]. It is fairly certain that Zhu Yuezeng is speaking of Tuhuolu, a domain which, according to ancient Chinese sources, lay to the south of the Great Yuezhi, which itself was 3,000 *li* (1,500 kilometres) to the west of Dawan (now Ferghana) [v. 1, vol. 2, 151]. N. Ya. Bichurin believes that Daxia was within present-day Afghanistan [v. 1, vol. 3, 175].

<sup>2</sup> Shache, one of the 36 governments of the 'Western lands' of the Han period, occupied the area now called Xinjiang [v. 26, 850]. The commentator identifies it with contemporary Yarkend [v. 27, 124]. Neither Daxia nor Shache could possibly be considered northern domains.

<sup>3</sup> The commentator identifies Loufan with the Ningwu region, in present-day Shanxi province [v. 27, 124]. The *Large Dictionary of Place Names* explains that Loufan was a domain of the northern Di during the Chunqiu period, and lay within the Ningwu region and other areas of present-day Shanxi [v. 26, 1171].

<sup>4</sup> The commentator relates Yuezhi with the Suzhou and Anxi districts in present-day Gansu province [v. 27, 124]. Originally, they were based in western Gansu but during the Han period they were defeated by the Xiongnu and migrated westwards, becoming a subject people of Daxia [v. 26, 157].

(the south-central zone) and part of Shaanxi province in the north-west, the Han River basin in the south and Shandong province in the east [v. 16, 96, 97].<sup>1</sup> Therefore, *Yi Zhou*shu *jixun jiaoshi* is clearly unreliable as a source of information on the Shang-Yin era. And, besides the direct refutations found in the Yin inscriptions, the *Yi Zhou*shu's reliability is further impugned by the fact that the tribes it mentions are nowhere found in those inscriptions—indeed, some of them, such as the Xiongnu, did not appear until the Zhanguo-Han period.

Summing up our discoveries thus far, we have established that the Yin state regularly waged defensive and offensive wars which enabled it to expand into neighbouring territories, and that from around the middle of the second millennium B.C. a system of relations developed between the Yin state and several surrounding tribes and domains. One of the basic forms of the dependence in which this system was rooted—sometimes real, often purely formal—was the delivery of tribute to the Yin court. We know only that local artefacts and foodstuffs were demanded as tribute; we have no information on the quantities and timing involved.

Political dependence was also reflected in courtesy visits made by rulers to the Yin *wangs*, and by military support for Yin campaigns against their enemies.

The personal expression of respect for the *wang* shown through these gifts and visits, though purely symbolic, also had a profoundly political significance in that it emphasised the fidelity of the rulers of adjacent and more distant domains and tribes to their supreme commander, the Yin *wang*.

Yin suzerainty, actual or formal, was reflected in the bestowal of honorary titles, such as *hou* and *bo*, which were awarded not only to members of the hereditary Yin nobility, and rulers of central and peripheral domains within the Yin state but also to the chieftains of non-Chinese tribes. In awarding these titles, the Yin *wangs* symbolically underscored the political dependence—frequently nominal—

<sup>1</sup> Li Xueqin notes that, in his campaigns against the Renfang when the Yin state was flourishing, Di Yi reached the middle stretch of the Wei River, while the main part of his expeditionary forces struck westwards through northern Henan to Shaanxi.

of the rulers of subject and allied domains and tribes.

Finally, we would emphasise that the system of relationships with states outside the Yin frontiers formed on approximately the same lines as the internal relationships between the *wang*—the supreme ruler and high priest—and the governors or rulers of the peripheral regions, and the hereditary nobility. There were, naturally, certain distinctions between the two systems, but the basic principles—rights and duties, forms and rituals—were fundamentally identical. And they were determined by the role and position of the supreme ruler in ancient China.

The Yin *wangs*, who often referred to themselves in written records as 'I, the one-and-only'—*yu yi ren*—were restrained by nothing and no one. In their hands was concentrated not only the supreme civil power but also all the land, the main means of subsistence in ancient time. And the *wang*, besides exercising untrammelled civil authority, was the high priest, the one responsible for the rituals of sacrifice to the spirits of the dead and the nature, supplicating them for good harvests, for rain, for success in military campaigns and so on.

Belief in the divinity of the *wang*, which was related to the cult of ancestor-worship, was a characteristic feature of the Yin era. The souls of the dead were accorded as much honour as the god *Di*, one of the major divinities.<sup>1</sup> From the reign of Wu Ding, in fact, the Yin *wangs* named their dead forebears 'Di' [v. 22, 91].

The Chinese character *wang*, especially in its early form, bears close resemblance to the representation of a divine figure or totem. It is this which gave rise to the concept of the Yin *wang* as the overlord of all lands, the supreme ruler of all peoples, both near and far, as the recipient of divine strength and favour.

Later in the Zhou era, this concept of royal divinity found expression in the 'Son of Heaven' doctrine, according to which the earthly ruler held heaven's mandate to govern all under the heavens. This idea is illustrated in poems in

<sup>1</sup> The Yins subscribed to animistic beliefs, a survival of more ancient practices, which attributed divine force to various nature spirits. But the major figure in their pantheon was *Di*, the supreme overlord of heaven.

the *Shi jing* dedicated to the Yin rulers. For example, the 'Hymn to Cheng Tang and Wu Ding' reads:

In ancient days the lordly will of warlike Tang  
Ruled supreme and set the bounds within all lands.<sup>1</sup>  
Dispatching his orders to the princes around,  
Over all the nine regions he governed unbound,  
The first sovereign lord of the mighty Shang line,  
With sole power from heaven, with honour divine,  
Now Wu Ding, his descendent, fills heaven's design.

[4, 461; 34, juan 20, 17].

The idea that the Chinese rulers exercised power over all peoples of the world through the will of the divine overlord (in the Yin period—subsequently it was through the will of heaven) fundamentally affected their attitude towards subject domains and tribes, as we noted above. The system of relationships which arose during the Yin era was further developed during the Zhou period (11th to 3rd centuries B.C.) and continued to flourish in substantially augmented form into the 19th century.

We can speak with confidence of the expansion of the 'Son of Heaven' doctrine in the Zhou period, since literally every one of the ancient Chinese sources contains a reference to the role of heaven. The doctrine, or, rather, religious system, arose during the transition from the Yin era to the Zhou period—that is, long before the development of the ethical doctrine known as Confucianism—as is proved by early Zhou inscriptions on bronze vessels.

The clearest expression of the idea that heavenly omnipotence stood behind the supreme ruler is found in inscriptions on the Da-yu tripod, which Chinese scholars attribute to the reign of Kangwang (1004-967 B.C.): 'In the ninth moon, the *wang* was in Zongzhou and commanded Yu, saying: "Yu, the radiant Wen-wang received the great will (order—*auth.*) of heaven to help the *wang*."<sup>2</sup> Wu-wang,

<sup>1</sup> This line emphasises that Cheng Tang exercised authority over the country on the will of the divine overlord, a notion which runs through the entire poem.

<sup>2</sup> This phrase has been incorrectly rendered in the Russian translation of Guo Moruo's book *Bronzovy vek* [The Bronze Age] as: 'Wen-wang did not receive a high post, but with heaven's aid attained a great destiny' [2, 31-32].

the heir of Wen [-wang], created the state. He uprooted evil things with his punishments, pacified the four corners (that is, all countries to the north, south, east and west—*auth.*). Previously, heaven wished to come close to the son (Cheng-wang—*auth.*) and with its orders defended the preceding wang (Cheng-wang—*auth.*)’...’ [8, vol. 6, 33b, 34a; 33, 94-96].

Inscriptions on bronze vessels which date to the early period of the Western Zhou (11th to 8th centuries B.C.) also refer to the will or commands of heaven, expressed by bringing the Zhou wangs to the throne or by visiting disasters on the country [9, 1-3].

Information of this kind, gleaned from such authentic sources as the bronze vessels, makes it possible to check the reliability of later written sources, which discuss the role of heaven in far greater detail. Several chapters of the *Shu jing* speak of the might of heaven, of the way heaven brought happiness to Wen-wang and enabled the small Zhou state to flourish [v. 35, juan 7, 11, 12]. ‘Heaven gave its great command to Wen-wang to destroy the Yin’ [35, juan 8, 1b]; ‘Great heaven presented the first wangs with the people of the Middle Kingdom and its lands’ [35, juan 8, 11a]. Other sources state that Zhou destroyed Yin on heaven’s command [v. 35, juan 9, 66], and that now only the Zhou wang continues to fulfill the wishes of the lord of heaven [35, juan 9, 6b].

These concepts of heaven and the view that the ruler (the ‘Son of Heaven’) governs the country on heaven’s commands permeate literally all ancient Chinese literature. It was expounded by thinkers of all persuasions, even those which followed mutually hostile trends. Following this religious doctrine the ruler—the ‘Son of Heaven’, *tian zi*—is declared supreme over the whole ‘Celestial Empire’—*Tianxia*—which, according to the ancient Chinese tradition, occupied not only Chinese territory as such but also the lands of more distant non-Chinese peoples—that is, the ‘barbarian’ periphery.

This view of the ‘Celestial Empire’ under its lord, the ‘Son of Heaven’, is found in several ancient sources. The *Zhou li*, for example, says that the *zhi-fang-shi* were ‘in charge of the *Tianxia*’ and that their jurisdiction encompassed not only the domains of the ‘Son of Heaven’ but also



'the barbarian periphery'—the *si yi*,<sup>1</sup> the *ba man*,<sup>2</sup> the *wu rong*,<sup>3</sup> the *liu di*,<sup>4</sup> and other tribes [v. 25, juan 8, 24b].

At times the term 'Celestial Empire' is replaced in the ancient sources by the term *sihai*, which means 'the four seas' or 'within the bounds of the four seas' (essentially identical concepts). 'Da Yumo', a chapter of the *Shu jing*, states: 'Great heaven with love gave a command extending (literally 'encompassing') to all the bounds of the four seas, and made [him] lord of the Celestial Empire' [35, juan 2, 1b].

Further proof that the concept of the 'Celestial Empire' extended beyond Chinese territory proper to embrace the lands of the non-Chinese peoples and tribes—which were considered by the ancient Chinese as an inalienable part of the 'Son of Heaven's domains—is found in the way the Celestial Empire was divided in ancient times. The sources indicate that the Celestial Empire was separated into several 'regions of subordination' or 'service'—*fu*.<sup>5</sup> Sometimes nine *fu*—*jiu fu*—are mentioned, sometimes five—*wu fu*. Sima Qian took the earliest extant references to them—in 'Yu-gong', a chapter of the *Shu jing*—and inserted it wholesale into the chapter of the *Shi ji* entitled 'Xia benji'. But we consider it most unlikely that this reference can be attributed to the Yu period—the prehistoric period—since the *wu fu* or *jiu fu* system reflected class relationships; this would indicate that the state in question already had a fairly well-developed bureaucratic and aristocratic hierarchy.

Analogous references in later sources, such as the *Guoyu* and *Zhou li*, differing in mere details, relate to the historical

<sup>1</sup> *Si yi* means 'the four barbarian tribes'—i.e., those which lived to the east. It also sometimes refers to all barbarians.

<sup>2</sup> *Ba man* means 'the eight man'—the southern tribes.

<sup>3</sup> *Wu rong* means 'the five rongs', the western tribes.

<sup>4</sup> *Liu di* means 'the six di', the northern tribes.

<sup>5</sup> *Fu* means 'to serve', 'to fulfill one's obligations', 'to obey'. In ancient sources, including the bronze vessel inscriptions of the Western Zhou, *fu* is used to signify service to the Emperor, fulfilment of specific obligations and, in particular, the offering of tribute. The bronze inscriptions at times refer simultaneously to *gengfu* and *jianfu*: the first means 'to inherit service and duties', which includes the idea of 'inheriting territory' [v. 32, 70-71]; the second, according to Chen Mengjia, means 'to appear before the *wang*, as an expression of obedience' [v. 32, 111-112].

Yin and Zhou periods. This coincidence, involving data which can hardly be considered reliable for the Xia period, is probably explained by the fact that writers in the latter half of the first millennium B.C. attributed the contemporary information and ancient legends at their disposal to the prehistoric period, though they had no scientific grounds for so doing.

The 'Yu-gong' gives us some basic idea of the *jiu fu*—*wu fu* system: beyond the bounds of the Son of Heaven's domains proper<sup>1</sup> lay the lands of the *dian fu* [v. 20, juan 2, 9/3; 35, juan 3, 7b]<sup>2</sup> (that is, the region under the jurisdiction of the *dian*<sup>3</sup>), the *hou fu*<sup>4</sup> and the *sui fu*, or the pacified domains,<sup>5</sup> all some 500 *li* apart from each other.<sup>6</sup> Further on, according to the *Guoyu*, was the territory of the *yao fu*<sup>7</sup>, which was inhabited by the Man and the Yi,

<sup>1</sup> These domains, described in some sources as 'royal lands'—*wang ji*,—extended over 1,000 square *li* [25, juan 8, p. 27b]. Sometimes these lands are called *wang guo* [v. 25, juan 3, p. 14b] and sometimes *bang ji* [v. 25, juan 10, p. 15a].

<sup>2</sup> The *Zhou li* takes its information from the *Shu jing* and the *Shi ji*: the *hou fu* was 500 *li* beyond the royal domains, while the *dian fu* was another 500 *li* beyond [25, juan 8, p. 27b, 28a]. The *Guoyu* repeats the information given in the *Zhou li* [v. 11, juan 1, 2b].

<sup>3</sup> It seems that *dian* was a title which passed from the Yin period into the Zhou era. It is found in the *Shu jing* [v. 35, juan 8, 12a]. The bronze inscriptions use instead the symbols *tian* or *hou tian*—'the rulers of the boundary territories' [v. 32, 86]. The Yin inscriptions also use the character *tian* along with the symbol for 'many'—*duo tian*—which means 'the rulers of domains dependent upon the Yin ruler'. Ding Shan, the Chinese scholar, believes that the Yin term *duo tian* and the term *hou dian* both mean 'sovereign rulers' [v. 12, 45-46]. The *Chun qiu Zuo Zhuan* mentions that the *dian fu* had to pay heavier tribute than any other titled domain [v. 29, 13th year of Zhao-gong].

<sup>4</sup> *Hou fu* means the domains of the *hou*. Since this term is also found in the bronze inscriptions [v. the inscription on the *Jing hou gui* vessel], there is no doubt that it reflects relationships which actually existed in society.

<sup>5</sup> The *Zhou li* makes no mention of the *sui fu*, placing instead the lands of the *nan fu* 500 *li* beyond the *dian fu* [v. 25, juan 8, 27b].

<sup>6</sup> The *Zhou li* adds the symbol *fan*, thus giving the distances as '500 square *li*' [v. 25, juan 8, p. 27b].

<sup>7</sup> It is extremely difficult to translate *yao fu*. Kong Anguo, a Tang commentator, interprets the first symbol as 'bound', 'controlled'. From this it follows that *yao fu* means a territory which was 'bound'—i.e., 'subject'. The *Zhou li* in one instance places the *yao fu*

both non-Chinese peoples [v. 11, juan 1, 2b].<sup>1</sup> Finally, beyond the *yao fu*, were the lands of *huang fu*, which also stretched over 500 *li* [v. 20, juan 2, 9; 35, juan 3, 7b-8a].<sup>2</sup>

Despite certain inconsistencies—for example on the number of *fu*, their location and demographic composition<sup>3</sup>—all the sources agree that they included both purely Chinese, ‘internal’ domains,<sup>4</sup> administered by members of the Chinese nobility, and non-Chinese, ‘barbarian’ lands—*yao fu* and *huang fu*—which were bound into the tributary system.

One should not, of course, take indications in the sources as to the size of these territories or the distances which divided them too literally.

Evidently the figure of 500 *li*, which is given for each *fu* in all the sources is not accurate, especially in the case of the ‘barbarian periphery’; it most likely represents an ancient Chinese schematic conception of geographical distances in the Celestial Empire. There is, however, no doubt that the *fu* did exist, since this is confirmed by the inscriptions on the bronze vessels of the Zhou period.

It is more to our present purposes to trace the relation-

lands 500 *li* beyond the bounds of the *wei fu* [v. 25, juan 10, 15b]. Elsewhere it states that the *man fu* (‘the territory of the *mans*, the barbarians’) lay beyond the *wei fu*, omitting all mention of the *yao fu* [v. 25, juan 8, 28a].

<sup>1</sup> The *Zhou li* divides the territory of the *man* and the *yi*. Placing the *man*—that is, the *yao fu*—3,500 *li* from the royal domains, it asserts that the territory of the *yi* lay 4,000 *li* beyond [v. 25, juan 10, 15b]. In another chapter it states that the *man* and the *yi* were 3,000 and 3,500 *li* respectively beyond the bounds of the royal domains [v. 25, juan 8, 28a].

<sup>2</sup> *Huang fu* may be translated as ‘the lands of the distant service’ or ‘the region of the farther service’, ‘the distant domains’, though a possible variant is: ‘the subordinate unpopulated (desert) region’. The *Guo yu* states that these lands were occupied by the Rong and Di tribes, i.e., western and northern non-Chinese peoples [v. 11, juan 1, 2b]. The *Zhou li* in place of the *huang fu* refers to the *yi fu*, ‘the service of the *yi* barbarians’ [v. 25, juan 8, 28a]. On the other hand, the *Zhou li* mentions nine *fu*—more than in the *Shu jing* and the *Shi ji*, which give five. After the *yi fu* the *Zhou li* speaks of the *zhen fu*, then the *fan fu*, the vassals [v. 25, juan 8, 27b, 28a].

<sup>3</sup> Mainly in the cases of the *yao fu* and the *huang fu*.

<sup>4</sup> By ‘internal’ we mean ‘within Chinese territory’. The term is not used in contradiction to ‘external’, since the sources state that the *hou fu*, the *dian fu*, the *nan fu* and the *wei fu* were ‘external *fu*’.

ships between the *fu* and the Celestial Empire, to which, according to ancient Chinese sources, they were subject. The majority of sources which mention them state that their rulers brought tribute<sup>1</sup> to the supreme master of the Celestial Empire, the Chinese *wang*. Sima Qian maintains that the presentation of tribute—*gong*—began in the days of the legendary Yu.<sup>2</sup> 'Yu went to make the acquaintance of those born of the earth in order (in accordance with this) to arrange for the presentation of gifts (*gong*)' [20, juan 2, 8/1; cf. 35, juan 3, 1a].

We have already discussed the kind of tribute offered in the Shang-Yin period. For the Zhou era we have more concrete information, provided in fairly full detail by the *Shu jing* and *Zhou li*. For example, 'Lü-ao', a chapter of the *Shu jing*, tells us: 'As soon as they subdued the Shang they set up contacts with various tribes.<sup>3</sup> The aliens to the west<sup>4</sup> began to send large dogs as tribute.... The *si-yi*<sup>5</sup> were all subdued. Despite the distance [at which they lived—*trans.*] all the tribes offered only everyday objects of local production' [35, juan 7, 6b].<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The *Shu jing* and *Shi jing* and other sources convey this concept through the character *gong*, which can be rendered as 'a presentation', 'to present'. The Western Zhou bronze inscriptions replace the symbol *gong* by the character *bin*, to convey the same meaning [v. 31, 158]. In the *Zhou li* we find the combination *bin gong* referring to one of the forms of tribute—silks and furs [v. 25, juan 1, 15a]. However, in the bronze inscriptions, *bin* usually conveyed the concept of giving (or presenting gifts) on the part of the rulers—*hou* or *bo*—of the domains to the *wang*'s envoys—that is, to the representatives of the central authority [v. 31, 158]—this refers to a selection of bronze inscriptions containing the character *bin*. The envoys were generally presented with cloth, silks, horses, shells and gold.

The *Zhou li* speaks of nine kinds of tribute—*jiu gong* [v. 25, juan 1, 15a, 15b].

<sup>2</sup> It is quite likely that in the prehistoric period *gong* (presentations) was the contribution made by the tribal warlords to the sacrifices offered by the leader of a tribe.

<sup>3</sup> Literally 'with the nine families of the *yi* and the eight groups of the *man*'—*jiu yi, ba man*.

<sup>4</sup> *Xi-lü* refers to the western Rong (Xi Rong).

<sup>5</sup> *Si yi* is literally 'the four tribes of the *yi*'. Here it refers to all the tribes.

<sup>6</sup> The *Guo yu*, in basic agreement, cites the first phrase of the *Shu jing* here quoted in its entirety but gives '100 (many) *man*'

The *Zhou li* states that tribute was offered by all the subject domains (*fu*) mentioned above—that is, by their rulers, the *zhou-hou*: 'Now the *zhou-hou* bring tribute (*gong*) in spring' [v. 25, juan 10, 17]<sup>1</sup>. Elsewhere the compilers of the *Zhou li*, basically following the *Shu jing*, write that each ruler was ordered to send what was already in his possession [v. 25, juan 8, 29a].

The *Zhou li* gives a meticulous description of the bureaucratic system and a strict definition of the nine different kinds of tribute offered by the nine *fu*: the *hou fu* sent *su wu*<sup>2</sup> once a year; the *dian fu* sent *bin wu*<sup>3</sup> once every two years—the commentator believed it to consist of cloth [v. 25, juan 10, 15a, 15b]; the *nan fu* sent ritual vessels once every three years; the *cai fu* sent *fu wu*<sup>4</sup> once every four years; the *wei fu* sent *cai wu*—building materials<sup>5</sup>—once every five years. On the 'barbarian' periphery, the *yao fu* brought *huo wu* or *huo gong* once every six years [v. 25, juan 10, 15b].<sup>6</sup>

The *Zhou li* is not entirely consistent when speaking of the subject territories and their tribute. For example, it seems that tribute was demanded of three other services mentioned above [v. 25, juan 8, 28a]—that is, the *yi fu*, the *zhen fu* and the *fan fu*—besides the *yao fu*. Yet in the same chapter [v. 25, juan 10, 15a, 15b] the *Zhou li*, after speaking specifically of the *yao fu*, mentions the non-Chinese periphery only in general terms, as the *fan guo* (the

instead of 'eight man'. In general the *Guo yu* takes all its information on this issue from the *Shu jing* and the *Zhou li* [v. 11, juan 5, 14b].

<sup>1</sup> The commentator explains that *gong* here refers to the tribute offered by the six services—*liu fu* [v. 25, juan 10, 17].

<sup>2</sup> In another chapter of the *Zhou li* it is called *si gong*. It consisted of pearls and shells [v. 25, juan 1, 15a].

<sup>3</sup> In another chapter of the *Zhou li* the term *bin gong* appears in the enumeration of the nine kinds of tribute. We believe that it means the same as *bin wu* [v. 25, juan 1, 15a, 15b].

<sup>4</sup> Elsewhere this tribute is called *fu gong*. The commentator holds that it was religious ceremonial dress—*ji fu* [v. 25, juan 1, 15b].

<sup>5</sup> This tribute was also called *cai gong* [v. 25, juan 10, 15b; juan 1, 15a].

<sup>6</sup> Here it is not completely clear whether or not the rulers brought their tribute personally to the royal court, seeking audience at the same time. In one chapter the commentator states that the tribute consisted of tortoises and sea-shells [v. 25, juan 10, 15b]; elsewhere he adds gold and jasper [v. 25, juan 1, 15b].

vassal domains),<sup>1</sup> and places those areas beyond the bounds of the nine regions [25, juan 10, 15b]<sup>2</sup>. It further states that the rulers of those areas visited the royal court only on their accession to the throne,<sup>3</sup> and at that time brought rare and costly gifts [v. 25, juan 10, 15b].<sup>4</sup>

This summarises the information on tribute found in the *Zhou li* and *Shu jing*; the *Guo yu*, since it depends heavily on them, adds nothing of value.

We are particularly interested in the tribute offered by the 'barbarian' periphery—the *yao fu* and *huang fu*—since this would throw light on the relationship between the Western Zhou and the non-Chinese peoples. All the sources agree that the non-Chinese tribes sent tribute to the Zhou wang; but the further details are contradictory in the extreme.

The *Zhou li* recorded that the *yao fu* sent tribute once every six years.<sup>5</sup> The *Guo yu* and *Shi ji*, however, mention no such schedule,<sup>6</sup> and state that the *huang fu* visited the court only when the wang died and his successor was confirmed [v. 11, juan 1, 3a; 20, juan 4, 14/4].<sup>7</sup> It is therefore not clear if the *huang fu* also presented tribute at some other time. We can assume, however, that the non-Chinese peoples sent tribute more often than once during each leader's lifetime, if not annually.

<sup>1</sup> In another chapter the *Zhou li* refers to *fan guo* as *fan fu*—the vassal service [v. 25, juan 8, 28a].

<sup>2</sup> The nine regions were Chinese territory proper. According to the *Shu jing* and *Shi ji*, they were formed in the reign of the legendary Yu. Chinese sources add that they existed later, in the Zhou era. Zheng Xuan, the *Zhou li* commentator, holds that the *yi fu*, *zhen fu* and *fan fu* were outside the nine regions [v. 25, juan 10, 15b].

<sup>3</sup> This phrase can be translated literally as: 'They appear at the court once in a generation.' The commentator explains that the rulers of domains outside the nine regions did not offer tribute annually, but came to court only when a son succeeded his father to the position of wang [v. 25, juan 10, 15b-16a].

<sup>4</sup> For example, according to the commentator, white wolves and white deer [v. 25, juan 10, 10a].

<sup>5</sup> This six-year period, however, could refer to the timing of courtesy visits. Possibly tribute was demanded more often.

<sup>6</sup> The verb is conveyed by the single symbol *gong*, which Wei Zhao, the commentator of *Guo yu* and *Shi ji*, interprets as meaning 'yearly tribute'—*sui gong* [v. 11, juan 1, 3a; 20, juan 4, 14/4].

<sup>7</sup> Here the *Guo yu* and the *Shi ji* completely coincide, which indicates that Sima Qian borrowed the text of the *Guo yu*.

Although it seems likely that the tribute was purely symbolic and was related to sacrificial practices,<sup>1</sup> it was none the less obligatory, and failure to fulfill tributary duties was severely punished, especially during the latter half of the Western Zhou period and throughout the Eastern Zhou period. For instance, Mu-wang (947-928 B.C.) is quoted as saying: 'I must take up arms [against those] who do not send *xiang* tribute<sup>2</sup> and show them my armed strength' [11, juan 1, 3b; 20, juan 4, 14/4]. Mu-wang then set out on a campaign against the Quanrong. The source tells us that he got his tribute—four white wolves and four white deer—but after this campaign the inhabitants of the *huang fu* never again appeared at the royal court [v. 11, juan 1, 3b, 4a; 20, juan 4, 15/1].

During the Western Zhou period (8th to 3rd centuries B.C.), the early Zhou tribute system was idealised to some extent—or at least considered to be more rational than the existing system. Zi Chan, a civil official of the Kingdom of Zheng (6th century B.C.), wrote in 529 B.C.: 'Previously the "Son of Heaven" regulated the sequence (the timing—*auth.*) of tribute, determined its quantities (literally: the heavy and the light—*auth.*). The tribute was increased in relation to [the degree of] nobility. Such was the Zhou system' [29, juan 38, 12a].<sup>3</sup>

Later he states that the heaviest tribute was extracted from the *dian fu*, which came directly within the domains of the 'Son of Heaven'. The Zheng rulers were given the titles *bo* and *nan* but tribute of the same quantity and quality as that offered by the Gong and the Hou was demanded from them [v. 29, juan 38, 12a].<sup>4</sup> Further criticising the contemporary tribute system, Zi Chan noted that never

<sup>1</sup> We postulate this on the grounds of the types of tribute mentioned in the *Zhou li* [v. 25, juan 1, 15a, 15b], the *Guo yu* [v. 11, juan 1, 2b-3a], and the *Shi ji* [v. 20, juan 4, 14/4].

<sup>2</sup> *Xiang* was tribute for the seasonal sacrifices. The *Guo yu* states that it was sent by the *bin fu*.

<sup>3</sup> The commentator Du Yu explains the penultimate phrase as follows: 'The Gong and the Hou [possessed] extensive lands and therefore had to pay a large amount of tribute.'

<sup>4</sup> Du Yu tells us that the Zheng territory lay beyond the *dian fu*—yet another confirmation of the existence of the *fu*. Since the rulers held the titles *bo*, *zi* and *nan*, they should not have had to pay as much tribute as the Gong and Hou.

a month went by without a summons from the royal court, that the quantities of tribute were not regulated by law or specific norms, that the tribute demanded was unlimited, and that it was even a matter of life and death, for the smaller kingdoms and domains [v. 29, juan 38, 12a].

The *Chun qiu Zuo zhuan* details several cases when a delay in sending tribute was punished. Though a more frequent occurrence within the Chinese domains, this was also known to happen outside Chinese territory.

The Qi kingdom<sup>1</sup> attacked the southern state of Chu in 656 B.C. The Chu ambassador, seeking an explanation from the Qi prime minister, Guan Zhong, received the following reply: 'You did not send your tribute of aromatic herbs. [And therefore] the sacrifices made by the *wang* were not done correctly. There was nothing with which to infuse the wine. For this we lay the responsibility [on you]' [29, juan 9, 5a; 37, 140]. The delayed tribute was apparently only one of the causes of the attack, and yet, judging from the Chu ambassador's response to the Qi complaints,<sup>2</sup> it is obvious that tribute played a significant role in the relations between the ancient Chinese kingdoms.

Though 'tribute', in the Eastern Zhou period and previously, was linked with sacrificial practices and was far from burdensome—as we see from the Chu episode related above—it was accorded tremendous significance because it was a symbol of political submission to the Zhou rulers.

Another interesting case in the ancient Chinese annals demonstrates once again that tribute could be a cause of wars. In 663 B.C. the Qi ruler sent his troops to the far north against the Shang-rong—the mountain Rong—who had attacked the northern kingdom of Yan (ruled by descendants of the house of Zhou), thus cutting its links with the Zhou *wang* and halting the supply of tribute. The Chinese source applauds this dangerous campaign into distant lands, since it was in the interests of the Zhou *wang* and undertak-

<sup>1</sup> Qi was one of the strongest kingdoms in this period. It was formally subject to the Zhou *wang* and administered several domains in his name.

<sup>2</sup> The ambassador replied: 'My word is guilty of not having sent the tribute. Would [we] really dare not to send it?' [29, juan 9, 6a; 37, 140].



en to re-establish the flow of tribute from Yan [v. 28, juan 3, 19b-20a].

The *Chun qiu Zuo zhuan* also mentions that during the Eastern Zhou period the Zhou *wang* received 'barbarian' prisoners of war as gifts from subject rulers.<sup>1</sup> The annals of 662 B.C. state that 'the *hou* of the Qi kingdom offered war trophies (prisoners—*auth.*).<sup>2</sup> [This] is not concomitant with the norms of behaviour (*fei li*). Every time the *zhuhou* (the rulers of subject kingdoms—*auth.*) are successful [in war] against the four tribes (*si yi*—i.e., various tribes—*auth.*), [they] send (trophies, prisoners—*auth.*) to the *wang*' [28, juan 3, 20a; 29, juan 7, 6b-7a].<sup>3</sup>

We are here concerned not with a moral assessment of the *hou*'s action but with the fact that subject rulers sent prisoners of war to the Zhou *wang* as an expression of subservience.

Even during the Eastern Zhou period, when the real power of the Zhou *wang* had weakened, tribute still played a significant role in the relations between the *wang* and the *zhuhou*, since it symbolised the political domination of the 'Son of Heaven', not only over the Chinese aristocracy but also over the rulers of peoples who lived far beyond the bounds of the Middle Kingdom. Yet the tribute system involved certain moral limitations which even the 'Son of Heaven' could not disregard. Though there are no direct references to these qualifications in the sources, oblique indications do exist. The *Chun qiu Zuo zhuan*, for example, in the section devoted to the 15th year of Huang-gong, a ruler of the Lu house (697 B.C.), records: 'The heavenly *wang* (the 'Son of Heaven'—*auth.*) sent Jia-fu [to the kingdom of Lu] with a demand to send carts [chariots]. [This] is not concomitant with the norms of behaviour. The

<sup>1</sup> During the Western Zhou period the practice continued: prisoners' ears were cut off and they were sent as gifts to the Zhou *wang*.

<sup>2</sup> The *Chun qiu Zuo zhuan* does not state whom the trophies were intended for. However, it is clear from the context and from the commentary to the *Chun qiu Guliang zhuan* that they were sent to the ruler of Lu.

<sup>3</sup> The commentator explains that a *zhuhou* who won a victory on the territory of the Middle Kingdom should not have sent trophies to the *wang*.

*zhuhou* did not send either chariots or clothing.<sup>1</sup> The "Son of Heaven"[could] not of his own volition<sup>2</sup> demand goods' [29, juan 4, 7b]. This shows without doubt that the subject rulers were not obliged to offer vehicles as tribute.

This event is also mentioned in the *Chun qiu Guliang zhuan*. Quoting the relevant passage in the annals, the author remarks that in ancient times the *zhuhou* offered the 'Son of Heaven' only what they had in their kingdoms. A demand for chariots, the commentator feels, is not concomitant with the norms of behaviour—on which point he is in full agreement with the compiler of the *Chun qiu Zuo zhuan* [v. 28, juan 2, 11a].

A similar episode, also described with disapproval in the ancient Chinese sources, occurred in 618 B.C., in the ninth year of the reign of Wen-gong, a ruler of the house of Lu. In 619 B.C., after the death of the Zhou ruler Xiang-wang, the Mao-bo, the Zhou ambassador, arrived in Lu demanding gold. 'Mao-bo (the ruler of the domain of Mao—*auth.*), [whose name was] Wei came to demand gold.'<sup>3</sup> This is not concomitant with the norms of behaviour' [29, juan 16, 5a].<sup>4</sup>

We see from the above that tribute was strictly regulated for all the categories of tributary, and that in every case it was to consist of local products. Evidently the Zhou *wang* did not have the right to extract whatever he wanted from the local rulers: at least, such was the case in the *Chun qui* period (8th to 5th centuries B.C.), when the power of the Zhou rulers has weakened and certain of the local rulers had become hegemons—*ba*—in their own right.

We note also that tribute from the non-Chinese peoples did not always arrive, especially as Zhou power began to

<sup>1</sup> Du Yu explains that carriages and clothing were bestowed by a person of higher rank upon an inferior.

<sup>2</sup> The text gives *si*, which could also be translated as 'in his selfish interests', 'for personal ends'—i.e., 'for his own person'.

<sup>3</sup> Du Yu points out that the gold was needed for Xiang-wang's obsequies. A Song commentator notes that from then on, though Lu sent no tribute, the Zhou *wangs* did not demand it [v. 29, juan 16, 5a].

<sup>4</sup> The commentary once again emphasises that the 'Son of Heaven' had no right to demand valuable goods on his own account; the act is deemed simply immoral. The *Chun qiu Guliang zhuan* comments: 'A demand for vehicles is admissible, but a demand for gold is excessive' [28, juan 6, 6b], but elsewhere the same source judges this act as immoral too.

fade. We mentioned above the case of the Rong-di, whose recalcitrance caused Mu-wang to mount an expedition against them. One source also reports that during the reign of Yi-wang (887-858 B.C.), Zhou influence waned to such an extent that the *huangfu* (outlying non-Chinese tribes) ceased to visit the court [v. 21, juan 117, 900/4]. We could cite several examples, but the vital point is that the dependence of the non-Chinese peoples on the Zhou *wang* was purely nominal and that they often had scant regard for the Son of Heaven's claims to rule the 'Celestial Empire'—that is, all the lands under heaven. The Rong, for example, not only stopped sending tribute but actually attacked several Chinese kingdoms in the 7th century B.C., and in 636 B.C. assaulted Luoyi, the capital of the Eastern Zhou, driving out Xiang-wang and setting his son Dai on the throne [v. 20, juan 110, 244/2, cf. 1, vol. 1, 42, 43].

The political power wielded over the non-Chinese tribes by the Chinese kingdoms was considerably undermined during the Eastern Zhou and Zhanguo periods, especially in the case of the Zhou *wangs*, who lost their hold on the entire country; only certain kingdoms—such as Qin, Zhao and Yan—could withstand the pressure of the nomad tribes and even sometimes defeat them. Given these circumstances, the tribute system, which had for several centuries served to regulate relations between ancient China and the non-Chinese periphery, was substantially vitiated, but did not disappear altogether. During the emergence of the centralised Qin (3rd century B.C.) and Han (3rd century B.C. to 3rd century A.D.) empires and throughout the Middle Ages the system survived in basic form and even took on new features—but that must be the object of a separate study.

Summing up, we may draw the following conclusions:

1. China had close and active relations with the surrounding tribes and peoples from ancient times. Chinese sources of the latter half of the first millennium B.C. claim that such relations even existed in the prehistoric period, in the time of the legendary Xia warlords.

We can describe the foreign relations of the Yin state (14th to 11th centuries B.C.) with a certain amount of confidence, since they are detailed in inscriptions on animal bone and tortoise shell, which we consider reliable sources.

Yin foreign relations were determined by objective causes, by the concrete historical conditions of the age: sometimes they were manifested in expansionist or defensive wars, and in times of peace there existed various forms of tribal dependence on the Yin rulers, expressed in the form of tribute, courtesy visits, participation in military campaigns etc.

2. As early as the Yin era there had arisen a religious doctrine with a political application, which viewed the *wang* as an earthly ruler who governed all peoples by the will of the heavenly overlord, Shang Di.

This doctrine was further developed during the Western Zhou period, becoming a religious system in which the role of heaven, through whose will the 'Son of Heaven' rules the 'Celestial Empire', occupied a central place.

3. On the basis of the 'Son of Heaven' doctrine there arose the idea of service and submission to the deified Chinese ruler on the part of all the rulers within the 'Celestial Empire', which included the non-Chinese periphery. Thus there grew up the concept of tribute, originally closely linked to the sacrifices performed by the 'Son of Heaven': tribute was a symbol of duty fulfilled, of service to the 'Son of Heaven' and, through him, to heaven itself. It was therefore natural that all the types of tribute, demanded from both the representatives of the Chinese nobility—the rulers of kingdoms and domains—and the chieftains of outlying tribes, were related to sacrificial rituals or times to coincide with major sacrifices.

Moreover, tribute, and courtesy visits to the Zhou court were not only an expression of deference to the 'Son of Heaven' and respect for him as the representative of heaven on earth, but also a sign of submission to his political domination on earth, within the 'Celestial Empire'.

In other words, the tribute system in ancient China symbolically expressed the political dependence of the Chinese rulers and some of the leaders of outlying tribes on the Zhou *wang*, the 'Son of Heaven'.

4. As the Zhou *wangs* lost their power and abdicated their dominant role in the political arena of ancient China, the tribute system underwent certain changes but never completely disappeared and was revived after the emergence of the centralised empires.

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CHINESE RELATIONS WITH  
THE XIONGNU IN THE FIRST  
TO THIRD CENTURIES A.D.

The relationships which China established with surrounding tribes and peoples during the 1st to 3rd centuries were based on principles which emerged in antiquity—that is, on the doctrine that the Chinese Emperor, the 'Son of Heaven', governs all creation, all under the heaven (the 'Celestial Empire'), from its centre, the Middle Kingdom (China).

From the mid-first century A.D., when the internal situation had stabilised, the Han Empire began to conduct an active foreign policy aimed at re-establishing China's position on the great silk route, lost during the reign of Wang Mang (9-23 A.D.), and at striking out westwards, towards Central Asia. But the way was barred by the Xiongnu, who controlled trade links and whose political influence at that time extended to several states of the 'Western Lands'—that is, of Central Asia.

China had already had considerable experience of diplomatic congress and military conflict with the Xiongnu. The established Chinese method was to employ bribery and intrigue in order to exploit internal chashes among the nomad tribes. By the mid-first century B.C., these methods had enabled China to split the Xiongnu and to win over Huhanye-shanyu as a vassal: he subsequently made several visits to the Chinese court, received costly gifts and married into a noble Chinese family. He was asked to protect the Chinese border from Shanggu to Dunhuang [v. 3, juan 94, 600/2; 1, vol. 1, 93].

After Huhanye-shanyu died in 31 B.C. his heirs kept up

their friendly ties with China, regularly sending ambassadors to the Chinese court, making personal visits and giving their sons as hostages in all but name into the service of the Chinese Emperor.

In the early years of the first millennium A.D. the Chinese tried to introduce new clauses advantageous to themselves into treaties signed with the Xiongnu previously, in 73 B.C. and 48 B.C.<sup>1</sup> They also demanded that the Xiongnu cede part of their lands, and Chinese mandarins forbade the Wuhuan, who were tributaries of the Xiongnu, to send cloth and skins to them [v. 3, juan 94, 601/3; vol. 1, 103]. The Xiongnu retaliated by devastating China's northern regions during the 2nd century B. C. [3, juan 94, 602/2; 1, vol. 1, 112].

The Eastern Han dynasty (25-220 A.D.) tried to win over the southern Xiongnu, planning to open the route to Central Asia with their help. Yet, though diplomatic relations between the Xiongnu and the Eastern Han were maintained, military confrontations still occurred between them.

In 30 A.D. the Emperor Guang Wu-di sent an embassy headed by Liu Li to the southern Xiongnu; in return they sent an envoy bearing gifts. Soon afterwards the Chinese court dispatched Han Tong with gifts of gold and silks, hoping thereby to revive a kinship and peace treaty that China had formerly concluded with the Xiongnu<sup>2</sup> [v. 7, juan 119; 6, 1352, 1, vol. 1, 114]. Meanwhile, in 33, 37, 44 and 45 A.D., the Xiongnu and Chinese armies clashed [v. 7, juan 119, 906/3, 906/4; 6, 1394, 1400, 1401].<sup>3</sup>

Later the Chinese Emperor exploited a power struggle between the Xiongnu headmen; he supported Bi, the grandson of Huhanye-*shanyu*, in a successful bid for the throne.

The elders of the eight families had put Bi forward for

<sup>1</sup> These clauses forbade the Xiongnu to give asylum to fugitives from the Middle Kingdom, fugitive Wusun inhabitants of the states of the Western Lands which had received tasselled seals from the Middle Kingdom and Wuhuan [v. 3, juan 94, 601/3; 1, vol. 1, 102].

<sup>2</sup> The treaty was thus named because its signing was accompanied by a marriage between the *shanyu*—the Xiongnu ruler—and a member of the Han dynasty.

<sup>3</sup> Here it states that the Xiongnu joined forces with the Xianbi and the Wuhuan in an attack on the Chinese frontiers.



the position of *shanyu* in 48 A.D. and had declared themselves ready 'to be an eternal bulwark and to repulse the northern slaves (that is, the northern Xiongnu—*auth.*)' [7, juan 119, 906/4; 6, 1407; 1, 117]. The council of court dignitaries, having discussed the offer made by the southern Xiongnu, unanimously concluded that 'it is inadvisable to agree, since it is difficult to distinguish sincerity and deceit on the part of the *yi-di* (barbarians)'. Only Geng Guo, a *wu-guan-zhonglangjiang* (administrator of five departments) advised that they follow the example of Emperor Xuan-di (74-48 B.C.)<sup>1</sup> and accept the offer 'so that they will protect [us] from the Xianbi in the east and repulse the Xiongnu in the north; then we will sternly rule the *si yi* (all the barbarians) and fully restore the border regions' [6, 1407].<sup>2</sup> The Emperor concurred.

Thus, thanks to the friendly relations which were established between China and the southern Xiongnu in the mid-first century A.D., the northern Xiongnu were subdued with the help of their southern neighbours and the Xianbi. A southern Xiongnu ambassador came to the Chinese court, calling his lord a Chinese vassal, bringing costly gifts and offering the *shanyu*'s son as a hostage. Moreover, when Chinese ambassadors visited the *shanyu*'s camp in 50 A.D., he was expected to fall prone and to bow as he received his orders. The *shanyu*, prostrating himself to the ground, again asserted his vassal status, and, at the end of the ceremony, asked the ambassadors through an interpreter not to humiliate him in front of his subordinates [v. 7, 906/4, 907/1; 6, 1415; 1, vol. 1, 118]. Ultimately the Chinese Emperor permitted the southern *shanyu* to settle in Yun-zhong region [6, 1415].

The emperors tried to win the *shanyus* over with lavish gifts. For example, in 50 A.D. the Emperor gave the *shanyu* a head-dress, a belt, clothing, a gold state seal, carriages, horses, sabres, bows and arrows, 10,000 pieces of brocade and other silks, 10,000 *jin* of paper fibre, 25,000 sacks of dried rice and 36,000 head of livestock [6, 1415; 7,

<sup>1</sup> Xuan-di had accepted Huhanye-*shanyu* as a vassal and established friendly relations with him in 53-52 B.C.

<sup>2</sup> This episode is not mentioned in the *Hou Han shu*. This source, however, states that the Emperor accepted Geng Guo's advice [v. 7, juan 119, 906/4].

907/1 ]<sup>1</sup>—and such presentations were not unusual.

Simultaneously control over the southern Xiongnu was tightened: a special official (*zhonglangjiang*) was appointed to govern them.<sup>2</sup> He was accorded a certain number of subordinate mandarins and a small force, which was to take up residence in the *shanyu*'s camp, to help settle disputes and keep order among the local people [v. 6, 1415, 907/1].<sup>3</sup>

When the northern Xiongnu attacked the southern Xiongnu, the Chinese Emperor invited the southern *shanyu* to move to the Xihe region of Meiji and ordered the ruler of Xihe to detail troops for his protection. And later, when some of the people of the eight border regions,<sup>4</sup> previously seized by the northern Xiongnu, were driven out, Xiongnu *wangs*, subject to the southern *shanyu*, were resettled in the uninhabited area and set up frontier garrisons there.

Thus, by the mid-first century A.D., the protracted military and diplomatic duel between the Eastern Han and the southern Xiongnu had ended in the latter's subjugation. This victory obviously influenced the northern Xiongnu: in 51 A.D. they sent an envoy to Wuwei to discuss peace and kinship. The council was summoned but could reach no decision, and the heir to the throne opposed the idea on the grounds that such an agreement might annoy the southern *shanyu* and alienate those of the northern Xiongnu who were well-disposed towards the Chinese *wang* [v. 6, 1417; 7, 907/1, 907/2; cf. 1, 121]. The Emperor agreed and the northern Xiongnu envoy was refused an audience.

But the northern Xiongnu did not abandon their hopes of improving relationships with China and in the following year sent another envoy bearing gifts of furs and horses and seeking a treaty of peace and kinship. It is interesting to note that he asked to be received along with an embassy from the Western Lands [7, 907/2; 6, 1420; 1, 121], which indicates that the Han Empire did not then have direct links with the states of the Western Lands and that they were in

<sup>1</sup> The list given in the *Zizhi tongjian* differs slightly from this.

<sup>2</sup> N. Ya. Bichurin calls this official a police officer.

<sup>3</sup> The *Hou Han shu* speaks of a force of 5,000 men in addition to the mandarins, while the *Zizhi tongjian* claims the force was 50 strong.

<sup>4</sup> These were Yunzhong, Wuyuan, Shuofang, Beidi, Dingxiang, Yanmen, Shanggu and Dai.

no way dependent upon the Chinese, although certain of them were dependent in some measure on the northern Xiongnu.

The Emperor's response to the envoy, compiled by Ban Biao<sup>1</sup> against the advice of the court council, is particularly interesting. We will not quote it in full, but merely cite the relevant passages.<sup>2</sup>

He began by trying to determine why the northern Xiongnu were so eager for 'peace and kinship' with the Chinese: 'Now the northern Xiongnu,<sup>3</sup> seeing that the southern *shanyu* has allied himself [to China], are afraid of a plot against their state, and for this reason have several times sought peace and kinship. Moreover, they have driven oxen and horses from afar in order to trade with the Han (China)...' [6, 1420; 7, 907/2; 1, 121]. His reasoning is obviously sound: the subjugation of the southern Xiongnu represented a real threat to the northern Xiongnu's position, as later events proved. In addition, the livestock trade with sedentary agricultural peoples such as the Chinese was vital to Xiongnu.

Ban Biao recommended a policy of 'no peace, no war' towards the northern Xiongnu—that is the maintenance of contacts without signing a treaty of peace and kinship. His report to the Emperor did not contain a direct answer to the northern Xiongnu's suggestion, but it is clear from its content and tone that he wished to avoid sending a positive reply. 'However, now, as [we] still cannot send help to the South,<sup>4</sup> it is not advisable to break off [our links] with the North. In an attempt to restrain them,<sup>5</sup> [we must] observe (literally: always answer with courtesy) the norms of behaviour (*li*).<sup>6</sup> This means that we must substantially

<sup>1</sup> Bichurin calls him Yan Banbu. This is clearly a distorted transcription: the distorted title has, moreover, been taken as a surname.

<sup>2</sup> Bichurin's full translation contains certain errors [v. 1, 121-123].

<sup>3</sup> The *Zizhi tongjian* has 'the northern *shanyu*'.

<sup>4</sup> Bichurin has: 'But as we have not yet completely protected the south' [1, 121].

<sup>5</sup> This is probably the first mention of *jimi*—the policy of restrain, of shackling, a policy which was widely pursued by China throughout the Middle Ages in the case of those semi-vassal states which could not be completely subjugated.

<sup>6</sup> Bichurin has: 'With the intention of curbing them, it is impossible not to reply with courtesy' [1, 121].

increase [our] awards and largesse, so that they will correspond (be equal) to their gifts (tribute)...' [6, 1420; 7, 907/2]. Ban Biao then suggests that the northern *shanyu* be reminded of the conflict between Huhanye and Zhizhi and of the way the Emperor Xuan-di 'saved' them both, of the destruction of the disobedient Zhizhi by the Han dynasty, of Huhanye's fidelity and filial deference, for which his descendants had been rewarded with tenure of the position of *shanyu*. Ban Biao also advised that the northern *shanyu* be intimidated by the threat of a southern Xiongnu campaign against him and at the same time be informed that the Chinese Emperor had nobly rejected numerous requests from the southern *shanyu* to send troops to join the attack on the northern Xiongnu. 'Now the southern *shanyu* with his people has moved southwards, has approached the fortified frontier and submitted [to us] ... [and has] asked [us] many times for troops, in order to return and purge the northern horde. [His] plans have been thought out to the last detail. We hold that it is not advisable to heed only one side (the southern *shanyu*—*auth.*). Moreover, in recent years the northern *shanyu* has sent tribute and expressed the wish to conclude [a treaty of] peace and kinship. Therefore we did not give our agreement (to the southern *shanyu*—*auth.*), wishing that the *shanyu*'s sense of devotion and filial esteem might mature (become firmly established)' [6, 1421; 7, 907/2; 1, 121].

Ban Biao's draft reply, which was accepted by the Emperor, then repeats the age-old assertion that all peoples should submit to the Emperor and enjoy his 'impartial' favours. 'The Han rules [with] might and fidelity, is sovereign over all states [in the world]. All that lives under the sun and the moon are his (the Emperor's—*auth.*) servants (literally: man- and maid-servants or slaves—*chence*—*auth.*). [In her relations with] many peoples with various customs, [China] is just and makes no distinction between those which are close and those which are distant. She rewards the obedient and punishes the recalcitrant and rebellious' [6, 1421; 7, 907/2; 1, 122].

Nor did Ban Biao pass over in silence the envoy's desire to present his gifts in company with the 'guests' from the Western Lands. The Chinese reaction is worth studying in detail: 'Now the *shanyu* wishes to renew the treaty of

kinship and peace. His sincerity is already evident. But why seek to present gifts together with the domains of the Western Lands? What difference does it make whether the domains of the Western Lands belong to the Xiongnu or to the Han (to China)?' [6, 1421; 7, 907/2, 1, 123].<sup>1</sup>

Obviously the Chinese Emperor was not pleased to see the dependence of the Western Lands on the northern Xiongnu underlined by the fact that their gifts were to be presented through the Xiongnu embassy. What the Chinese reply, behind its formulaic veil, actually means is: your wish to conclude a treaty of peace and kinship signifies your submission to us; consequently your subject domains will become our vassals, and therefore it does not matter whether the Western Lands are subject to you or to us.

However, this interpretation of the Xiongnu initiative, based as it was on the idea of the Chinese Emperor as lord of all creation, was not at all what the Xiongnu had in mind. In seeking a peace and kinship treaty they had certainly not intended to hand themselves and their domains in Eastern Turkestan over wholesale to China, for as is clear from the precedent of Xiongnu-Chinese relations in the early 2nd century B.C., during the reign of Mode-*shanyu*, the concept of peace and kinship in no way entailed vassalage. The treaty with Mode declared the absolute equality of both sides and the establishment of friendly relations between them. Indeed, the treaty was actually disadvantageous to China, since it involved concessions to the Xiongnu: the Emperor was to give his daughter in marriage to a Xiangnu ruler and send him an agreed quantity of gifts every year. But as time went by the treaties concluded between China and the nomad tribes altered: the real balance of power and the might of the Empire determined the nature of Chinese foreign relations and the essence of diplomatic agreements.

The scales of history were gradually tipping in favour of the Han Empire, which had established internal order by the mid-first century A.D. and was going from strength to strength. Yet the northern Xiongnu, though partially

<sup>1</sup> Bichurin suggested that the northern *shanyu*'s motive in wishing to present the gifts from Eastern Turkestan, a subject state of the northern Xiongnu, was to receive a larger quantity of reciprocal gifts from the Emperor.

isolated and certainly weakened by the southern Xiongnu defection to the Chinese side, were still independent and still strong enough to be an annoyance to China. And this is why the Empire, while not wishing to enter into close relations with them, intended to apply the policy of 'shackling'—of buying off non-allied rulers with largesse.

Relations between China and the northern Xiongnu in the latter half of the 1st century A.D. were strained, although the northern *shanyu* sent yet another envoy in 55 A.D. The Emperor replied by sending a missive with a state seal and gifts of silk, but offered no envoy in return [7, 907/2; 1, 123].

In 62 and 63 A.D. the northern Xiongnu made incursions into Han territory and were repulsed with the aid of the southern Xiongnu. In 64 A.D. the northern *shanyu* petitioned China to renew trade links [v. 6, 1445].<sup>1</sup> The Han Emperor, Liu Zhuang (Ming-di, 57-75 A.D.), on the assumption that the revival of links with the northern Xiongnu would halt the border raids, sent a military commander—*yue qi-sima*—called Zheng Zhong northwards with a positive reply in 65 A.D. The southern Xiongnu, disturbed by the prospect of a revival of relations between China and their northern neighbours, decided to abandon their own understanding with China: they secretly contacted the northern Xiongnu with a view to launching joint military operations. But Zheng Zhong got wind of this and reported it to the Emperor, pointing out the need to prevent this nascent union. For this purpose a fortified observation camp *du liao ying*—was set up in Liao [6, 1446; 7, 907/3; 1, 124, 125].

For the next 20 years relations with the northern Xiongnu remained tense: the Xiongnu continued their border raids while the Han Empire sought some way of crippling its inveterate enemy. In 73 A.D. a huge Chinese force crossed the frontier at four separate points, with orders to destroy the Xiongnu. But the enemy, forewarned, avoided an engagement by retreating to the far north. Yet during this period certain of the northern Xiongnu, following what they judged to be personal interest, broke away and joined

<sup>1</sup> The *Hou Han shu* adds that the northern *shanyu* sent an envoy to seek a peace treaty based on kinship [v. 7, 907/3].

China.<sup>1</sup> The northern *shanyu* again raised the question of trade with Chinese merchants in 84 A.D. China agreed, but the 10,000 head of livestock and horses sent to open the deal were captured by southern Xiongnu light cavalry.

This was the last attempt made by the northern Xiongnu to establish normal links with China. Chinese sources record that internal conflicts began among the Xiongnu in 85 A.D., prompting 73 clans to flee to China. Shortly afterwards the northern Xiongnu found themselves under attack from several quarters: the southern *aimaks* (the Nanbu—probably the southern Xiongnu) attacked frontally, the Dingling from the rear, the Xianbi from the east and the peoples of the Western Lands (i.e., Turkestan) from the west [6, 1502; 7, 907/3]. The northern Xiongnu could not withstand such an onslaught; with heavy losses they withdrew deep into the desert. There is no doubt that China played a considerable role in this organised assault, though from the silence of the sources we assume that her troops were not directly involved. Not long before the great attack began, Ban Chao, a Chinese diplomat and general, had arrived in the Western Lands and by means of guile, deceit, provocation and blackmail had succeeded in persuading certain of the rulers in East Turkestan to rise against the northern Xiongnu. In this he was adopting the ancient tactic of 'destroying the barbarians by using the barbarians'. It only remained for the Han Empire to exploit the victory in which they had played no part and finish off the Xiongnu altogether, a plan which was brought yet closer to fulfilment in 87 A.D., when the Xianbi invaded the eastern lands of the northern Xiongnu, defeated them and killed Youliu, their *shanyu*. Internecine conflicts among the northern Xiongnu became more intense, and there was a mass Xiongnu defection to China. 'In the northern camp (horde) [there is] great confusion. The Qulanchu, Bihu, Duxu,<sup>2</sup> and others—58 *aimaks* (Bu—this possibly means clans) [consisting of] 200,000 souls and

<sup>1</sup> In 83 A.D., for example, over 30,000 Xiongnu, led by Sanmulouzi, Jiliusi and others, defected to the Chinese side [v. 6, 1491; 1, 125]. The *Hou Han shu* gives the figure as 38,000 [v. 7, 907/3].

<sup>2</sup> Bichurin misled by incorrect punctuation, names the clans thus: Güyelan, Chubingwu, Duxu [v. 1, 127]. Here we follow the punctuation given in the modern Chinese edition of the *Zizhi tongjian*, where one clan the Qulanchu—is mentioned [v. 6, 1510].

8,000 trained soldiers<sup>1</sup> have arrived in Yunzhong, Wuyuan, Shuofang and Beidi, declaring their obedience' [6, 1510; 7, 907/4, 1, 127].

Other disasters, meanwhile, were assailing the northern Xiongnu. A famine following a plague of locusts encouraged the southern *shanyu* to petition the Dowager Empress Dou, offering to make war on his northern neighbours, so that the Chinese might afterwards form a single domain from the southern and northern Xiongnu territories. Aware that his own military strength was inadequate, he asked for help from the combined forces of Hexi, Yunzhong, Wuyuan, Shuofang and Shangjun to dispatch his enemy with one fell blow [v. 6, 1515; 7, 907, 4].<sup>2</sup>

The reaction of the Chinese court to the *shanyu*'s petition is interesting. Geng Bing, the court official detailed to study it, counselled the Dowager Empress to accede to the suggestion, adding that in the reign of Wu-di (140-87 B.C.) the Chinese had tried to subdue the Xiongnu but had been prevented by circumstances. 'Now, fortunately, circumstances are auspicious: the northern barbarians are gripped by discord [and] it would pay the government to "destroy the barbarians by using the barbarians". It is advisable to agree [with the suggestion of the southern *shanyu*]' [6, 1515; 7, 908/1]. Thus the Chinese decided to follow their traditional policy of setting foreign peoples against each other.

In 89 A.D. a combined force of southern Xiongnu and Chinese, who were commanded by generals Dou Xian and Geng Bing, attacked the northern Xiongnu from Shuofang and defeated them heavily. The northern *shanyu* ran away and over 200,000 prisoners were taken [7, 908/1, 1, 127].<sup>3</sup>

Military operations against the northern Xiongnu continued from another three years, until they were completely

<sup>1</sup> The *Zizhi tongjian* mentions no soldiers, giving instead a total of 280,000 supplicants [v. 6, 1510].

<sup>2</sup> Bichurin has not translated the *shanyu*'s lengthy document into Russian.

<sup>3</sup> The *Zizhi tongjian* adds that 13,000 prominent *wangs* and other Xiongnu were killed, an enormous number of prisoners taken and 1,000,000 head of livestock seized. Eighty one clans—minor *wangs* and their subjects, a total of 200,000 people surrendered. The Chinese army marched more than 3,000 *li* (1,500 km) beyond the Chinese border [6, 1521, 1522].



defeated and their *shanyu* killed. During these campaigns the Chinese army took Yiwu (Hami), an area earlier conquered by the northern Xiongnu [v. 6, 1525].

By the end of the first century A.D. the northern Huns were utterly routed and large numbers of them were resettled in the border regions of the Han Empire. Yet many of them later took part in rebellions against the Chinese authorities which were, however, easily dealt with.

The once-powerful Xiongnu state lay in ruins.<sup>1</sup> Yet there, remained minor Xiongnu domains, or, as Bichurin calls them, appanages, in North-West Mongolia [v. 1, 129], as we know from the fact that in 104 A.D. the northern *shanyu* sent an envoy with gifts<sup>2</sup> to petition for a peace and kinship treaty similar to that concluded with Huhanye. The Emperor Hedi (88-106 A.D.) rewarded the envoy generously but sent him back with no reply [v. 6, 1560; 7, 908/2, 1, 132]. This scenario was repeated in 105 A.D., when a Xiongnu envoy arrived in Dunhuang with gifts for the Imperial court and request from the *shanyu* for an exchange of ambassadors. He offered the *shanyu*'s son as hostage. The Chinese ruler, the Dowager Empress Dengtaihou, returned the envoy with numerous gifts but without an answer [v. 6, 1561, 7, 908/2].

The house of Han, feeling that the enfeebled Xiongnu presented no threat to the Chinese Empire, chose to ignore their advances until the 3rd century A.D. Meanwhile the southern Xiongnu several times joined the subjugated northern Xiongnu in risings against the oppressive local authorities, but the Chinese, aided by the Wuhuan, Xianbi and Qiang lost little time in suppressing the unrest. We shall not detail those risings, for present purposes, their most important feature is the way they illustrate the Han method of dealing with the nomad peoples. For example, following the suppression of the rising of 140 A.D., the Emperor accepted the advice of Liang Shang, the supreme military commander—*da jiangjun*—to bribe the Xiongnu headmen

<sup>1</sup> Bichurin states categorically that in 93 A.D. 'the northern house of the Xiongnu ceased to rule' [1, 129].

<sup>2</sup> The Chinese source uses the term *gong xian*—'gifts', 'the offering of tribute'. But, since the northern Xiongnu and China did not have a tributary relationship at that time, the terminology here is suspect.

into peaceful submission. A new military tactic, that of sitting out conflicts behind sturdy fortifications, was also adopted at this time. Liang Shang described it as follows: 'The Middle Kingdom is calm and has long known no war. To concentrate the best cavalry in the field and carry the day under a hail of arrows—such is the forte of the nomad peoples and the weakness of China.

'To stand behind a town wall with a loaded crossbow, to put up a stubborn defence in a fortified camp and wait until the enemy weakens—in that is Middle Kingdom's forte and the weakness of the nomads' [6, 1687, 7, 908/4; 1, 135].

Of the large-scale southern Xiongnu risings, two deserve particular mention: that of 156 A.D. and, one of even greater note in 158-159 A.D., when all the *aimaks* (clans) subject to the southern *shanyu* allied with the Wuhuan and the Xianbi and laid waste to nine border regions. The rising was put down by Zhang Huan.

The Chinese Empire was in a state of crisis under the last three Eastern Han emperors: a power struggle began among the military and feudal cliques and in 189 A.D. a widespread peasant uprising—the Yellow Ribbon rebellion—swept the land. As a result control over the Xiongnu in the border regions slackened off considerably, and they found themselves with greater freedom of action. Some of them joined the peasant rebels, others went into the service of the military-feudal groups and took part in feudal civil wars. In one case, Cao Cao, having crushed a rising in the Bingzhou district, impressed large numbers of Xiongnu into his army: this we learn from the biography of Liang Xi, a mandarin who had been appointed *cishi* in Bingzhou at a time when the local insurgents were in contact with the Xiongnu and another non-Chinese peoples. Liang Xi managed to put down the rising, recruit certain of the local inhabitants, including the Xiongnu, into the army and resettle their families—several tens of thousands of people in all—in Ye [v. 5, juan 15, 965/1]. This enforced migration caused unrest which was met with harsh punishments. 'As regards those who did not obey the orders, the army was sent to punish them. More than 1,000 people were beheaded, and tens of thousands of people are numbered among those who surrendered' [5, 965/1].

Yet this is not the end of the story. During the Sanguo

(220-265), and Western Jin (265-316) periods the Xiongnu were still living in the northern border regions under Chinese control and still migrating over the Great Wall into China. In the early years of Wu-di's reign (265-290), 20,000 nomad *luo*<sup>1</sup> crossed the border and settled in Hexi near the old town of Yiyangcheng. From that time the Xiongnu lived alongside the Chinese population in Pingyang, Xihe, Taiyuan, Xinxing, Shangdang and Leping [v. 4, 839; 8, juan 97, 1337/4]—that is, in the area which is now Shanxi province and part of the Autonomous Region of Inner Mongolia.

Despite close Chinese surveillance, the Xiongnu caused a great deal of trouble both with their risings and their role in the civil wars. Thus, in early 271, shortly after the emergence of the Western Jin Empire, *shanyu* Liu Meng<sup>2</sup> raised a rebellion, but was murdered by one of his own subjects, Li Qu, the headman of the western *aimak*, on the instigation of the Chinese high command. After this, under Chinese pressure, the Xiongnu remained quiet for some time [v. 4, 839; 6, 2514, 2519; 2, 321].

In 280 Guo Qin, a prominent mandarin from Xihe, reported that the Xiongnu were concentrated enough to organise another rising with great ease. He advised their resettlement as a reasonable precaution [v. 6, 2575, 2576; 4, 839; 2, 321, 322].<sup>3</sup>

Yet the obviously dangerous practice of settling every group of immigrant Xiongnu in the same area was continued. The 29,300 who crossed the border under Hu Taichou in 284 were settled in Xihe [v. 6, 2589; 4, 839]. Hu Du-

<sup>1</sup> N. V. Kyuner interprets *luo*, incorrectly in our view, as 'nomad camp' [v. 2, 321]. We assume that each Xiongnu *luo* contained one extended family, judging from the number involved and from data relating to other peoples in a later period. Thus, the *Bei wei* states that during the siege of Guzang in 439, General Yuan He won upwards of 30,000 non-Chinese *luo* to his side. The *Zizhi tongjian* asserts that several hundred thousand members of non-Chinese *hu* ('households', 'families') surrendered to him. We can be sure that these two figures are related, and therefore conclude that each *luo* contained a dozen or more people—i.e., corresponded to the Chinese concept of *hu* ('household') and the non-Chinese 'tent'.

<sup>2</sup> The *Jin shu* calls him *shanyu*; the *Zizhi tongjian* names him 'the right (i.e., western) *zhuxi* (prince)' [6, 2514].

<sup>3</sup> Kyuner's translation of Guo Qin's report contains several major inaccuracies.

dabo and Hu of the Weisha clan brought large and small clans<sup>1</sup> numbering over 100,000 people to Yongzhou in the autumn of 286. In the following year another contingent, 11,500 strong [v. 2, 322; 4, 839; 6, 2592], bringing 22,000 head of large livestock and 105,000 head of small livestock [4, 839; 6, 2592],<sup>2</sup> surrendered to the Chinese.

From then until 294 the Chinese chronicles make no mention of the Xiongnu, who evidently lived peacefully in their border regions, not troubling the Chinese authorities in any way.

But in 294 the Xiongnu began a drive for independence. The unrest began on a local scale in the summer of that year, when Hesan<sup>3</sup> attacked Shangdang, killed the *zhangshi*, one of the most prominent mandarins, and invaded Shangjun [v. 4, 840; 6, 2613; 2, 323]. Within three months he and his fellow-tribesmen surrendered and he was killed by the *duwei* of Pingyi [v. 6, 2613].<sup>4</sup>

This, though, was not the end of this episode. Hesan's action prompted a mass rising of the Xiongnu and other non-Chinese tribes. In 296<sup>5</sup> Duyuan, Hesan's younger brother, led the Xiongnu, the Qiang of the Pingyi and Beidi regions,<sup>6</sup> and the Hu—possibly the Wuhuan and Xianbi—from Lushui<sup>7</sup> in a rebellion [v. 4, 840; 6, 2614; 8, juan 4, 1086/4] which helped to strengthen the position of the Xiongnu and draw other non-Chinese peoples into a protract-

<sup>1</sup> The *Jin shu* uses the characters *zhong lei* to signify kinship groups; the *Zizhi tongjian* uses *zhong luo* [4, 839; 6, 2591].

<sup>2</sup> Kyuner transcribes the Xiongnu names incorrectly, combining name and title or clan.

<sup>3</sup> Kyuner is mistaken in calling him Shesan [v. 2, 323].

<sup>4</sup> The *Zizhi tongjian* commentary states that Hesan went from Shangdang to Luoyang to give himself up; to do this he had to pass through Henei. He evidently crossed the Huang Ho and proceeded to Pingyi, which is to the south-west of Shangdang and west of Luoyang, where, as the chronicle reports, he met his death.

<sup>5</sup> The *Jin shu* (juan 97, the chapter on the Xiongnu) is incorrect in stating the Duyuan's rising was in the year following Hesan's [v. 4, 840]. We know that Hesan rose in the 4th year of the Yunkang era (294) and Duyuan in the 6th year of that era [v. 8, juan 4, 1086/4; 6, 2615].

<sup>6</sup> Both regions are in the territory of the present-day Shaanxi province.

<sup>7</sup> Lushui was within Anding region, in the present-day Gansu province.

ed struggle with the Western Jin. In 20 years the Chinese army was utterly defeated and Jin power in northern China completely destroyed. It is with good reason, therefore, that the *Jin shu*, following a short description of the Hesan and Duran rebellions, ends its chapter on the northern Di (the Xiongnu) with these words: 'After this the northern Di steadily began to flourish and the Middle Plain was seized by confusion' [4, 840].<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kyuner has translated this phrase inaccurately [v. 2, 323].

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**CHINA AND VIETNAM FROM  
THE THIRD CENTURY B.C.  
TO THE THIRD CENTURY A.D.**

Archaeological excavations show that as early as the second millennium B.C. an extensive ethnic community, known as the Jiao Zhi or Riao Ti, had formed in the valley of the lower and middle Yangtse River. They were closely related to the inhabitants of the Xijiang River valley and north-east Indochina, since this whole area embraced a single late-Neolithic culture characterised by the shouldered adze and pottery decorated with stamped patterns. Tools—the hoe and pick—and weapons were of a common type and their settlements were enclosed in an identical way.

The Jiao Zhi—the ancestors of the modern Vietnamese—differed from their northern neighbours, the Chinese, in certain respects. Professor Dao Ju An, the Vietnamese historian, has concluded from his study of ancient Chinese annals that the forebears of the Vietnamese inhabited an area which now covers the provinces of Hunan and Jiangxi and part of Hubei and Anhui provinces—that is, around Lake Dongtinghu and along the middle stretch of the Yangtse—until the Zhanguo era (5th to 3rd centuries B.C.) [v. 2, 116]. Then they gradually began to migrate south.

The most powerful of the early Vietnamese communities was the state of Viet (Yue), which occupied the area now covered by Zhejiang province and which fought the Chinese states of Wu and Chu in the 4th century B.C. In 333 B.C. the Chu conquered the western part of Viet, forcing the Viets to move southwards, and from that time the name of Viet (Yue) is replaced in the Chinese sources by the name Bat Viet (Bai Yue)—‘the Hundred Families of the Viet’.

These tribal unions lived in the territory now known as Fujian and Guangdong provinces.

The Viet tribes in north-eastern Indochina came together in 257 B.C. to form the state of Aulak (257-207 B.C.), which extended southwards from the delta and middle course of the Red River.

There was peace between Aulak and China for over 30 years, largely because the formerly powerful Chu state had no time to concern itself with its southern neighbour until the latter half of the 3rd century B.C., being fully occupied with the attacks of another Chinese state—the more mighty Qin.

Aulak traded with the Chinese kingdoms—apparently with considerable success, as Chinese coins were widely current throughout Aulak. The Chinese merchants brought weapons—bronze and iron swords, spears, daggers and so on. The Aulak nobility were also keen to possess Chinese bronze and ceramic vases, large bronze flagons decorated with stylised *tao te* masks, and large, flat-bottomed conical vessels with relief decorations and small, separately attached handles. In addition, Aulak bought agricultural implements and large livestock, and sent metal artefacts, rhino horns, pearls, kingfishers feathers, precious stones and jewellery to China.

This peaceful intercourse between Aulak and China was brusquely interrupted after the emergence of the Qin Empire, the first centralised Chinese state (221-207 B.C.). Once the civil wars were over, China could seriously consider extending her southern borders. The Chinese ruling classes—the administrative elite, the hereditary aristocracy, the rich merchants—had long wanted to dominate their southern neighbours: according to the *Huainanzi*, a document compiled at the dawn of the first millennium A.D., they were well-informed about the areas inhabited by the Vietnamese and aware that they abounded in objects highly prized within the Empire—for instance, rhino horn, which the Chinese used to make a costly medicine, ivory, colourful feathers, rare birds and pearls [v. 8, juan 18, 23-27].

Shortly after the unification of China, Emperor Qin Shi-huang attacked Vietnamese lands with 500,000 regular troops, divided into five armies and deployed in five directions over a wide front. The sources mention only three of



the commanders—Tu Jue, Ren Xiang and Zhao Tuo—by name.<sup>1</sup>

The attack, conducted under unfamiliar climatic conditions which the northerners found hard to bear, was further complicated by the impossibly bad roads, which made provisioning and the transport of weapons difficult. The local population retreated into the forests and hills, taking their goods and livestock with them and leaving the Chinese army bereft of all basic necessities [8, juan 18, 23]. With the troops bogged down, the campaign seemed certain to fail.

The Chinese high command then detailed part of their force to dig a canal between the Xianshui River, which flowed from Lake Poyanghu, and the Liushui, a tributary of the Xijiang. The canal, completed in record time and named 'the provisioning road', solved one of the army's major problems.

But still the advance proceeded extremely slowly, with ceaseless harrassment from the Lakviets, whose lightning attacks came unexpectedly at all times of the day and night, in a type of guerilla warfare which suited the Chinese army not at all. They were under constant strain, as a Chinese source informs us: '[For] three years [the Chinese soldiers] did not remove their armour, did not loose [the strings of] their crossbows' [8, juan 18, 23]. It must be said that the first three years brought some successes: the army advanced on all five fronts and killed Yiyusong, the ruler of Western Aulak. Yet they could not secure the territory they had conquered. And in 214 B.C. the Aulak army, reinforced with contingents from the Yue tribe, defeated the Chinese forces in a night battle, killing General Tu Jue [v. 8, juan 18, 23-24].

Seeing that the southern campaign was in dire danger, Qin Shi-huang hurriedly put the entire country under arms, sending out emissaries who scoured the land in search of 'those who had escaped military service' [11, juan 6, 462]. Thus, in 214 B.C. a new force, whose size and composition are not recorded in the extant sources, was dis-

<sup>1</sup> A. I. Mukhlinov and D. V. Deopik are incorrect in attributing command of this campaign to Zhao Tuo alone [v. 4, 221; 2, 89]. In 214 B.C., after the defeat of the first expedition, Qin Shi-huang sent out another force under the sole command of Zhao Tuo [v. 11, juan 112; 7, 4-6].

patched under Zhao Tuo to help the retreating army in the south. With these reinforcements the Chinese took Namviet and the north-eastern sector of Aulak, again uniting the area and creating within it the regions of Nanhai (now the province of Guangdong), Guilin (now Guangxi) and Xiang ('Elephant Land').

Scholars are still disputing the whereabouts of Xiang. A. Maspero believes that it was in the southern part of what is now Guangxi [v. 17, 49-55]; T. V. Stepugina places it approximately on the 17th parallel, within northern Vietnam [v. 1, 481]; Min Chan, the Vietnamese historian, agrees [v. 9, 12], and so does the Soviet ethnographer A. I. Mukhlinov [v. 4, 222].

D. V. Deopik takes a rather different view of the matter: 'For our purposes,' he writes, 'it is important to note that, regardless of where the Qin were planning to create the *jiong* (region) of Xiang, all the evidence indicates that the army got only as far as Minzhong and Nanhai regions, which both lie further to the north. Thus the major question—whether or not the Qin subjugated the Lakviets—must be answered in the negative' [2, 17]. In the *Historical Atlas of China*, Gu Jiejang, the Chinese historian, sets Xiang's southern frontier almost on the 13th parallel, thus including almost all of Chongbo district [v. 6, 6]. The PRC middle schools map of the Qin Empire follows suit [v. 13].

The controversy is compounded by the fact that certain historians, Deopik among them, cast doubt on the very existence of Xiang and deny that it was ever subject to the Qin Empire. Yet this is a pivotal issue, for agreement on the whereabouts of Xiang would help us ascertain the depth of Chinese penetration into ancient Vietnam and decide whether or not Aulak capitulated to the Empire. Thus we must discuss this question further.

Firstly, we shall consider whether Qin troops entered the territory in question—that is: was Xiang actually created or was it no more than a Qin project, as Deopik maintains?

The earliest and most reliable of our sources is Sima Qian's *Historical Notes*, compiled over the turn of the 2nd century B.C. In the sixth chapter, which is devoted to a biography of the Emperor Qin Shi-huang, we read: 'In the 33rd year of his reign (214 B.C.—*auth.*) those who had evaded military service, hostage sons-in-law (a category

of slave held by private individuals—*auth.*) and traders were called into the army [and] they were sent to capture the lands of Luliang and when the regions of Guilin, Xiang and Nanhai were formed [in those lands] they were sent to guard [the newly conquered territory]' [11, juan 6, 462]. Sima Zheng and Zhang Shoujie, the Tang commentators of the *Historical Notes*, add that 'the lands of Luliang' were inhabited by 'cruel people' who had settled in the mountains south of the Five Peaks [v. 8, juan 18, 23]; in other words, Luliang was the Chinese name for areas inhabited by the ancient Vietnamese.

The Chinese had good cause to call the Viets 'cruel people': they opposed the invaders with all their might and inflicted serious losses on them. In the night encounter when the Viets killed Tu Jue, 'blood flowed in rivers [and] several hundred thousand were killed...' [8, juan 18, 24]. Though this figure is no doubt inflated, it is a fact that the war with the Viets bled China white.

After the supplementary mobilisation of 214, Qin Shihuang moved his army south with some difficulty. Sima Qian's *Notes* indicate that Xiang region was formed and that Qin troops were sent to control it—for the Viets would never have given up their land without a fight—and even give concrete data on the force that was detailed to guard Xiang, Guilin and Nanhai.

Having established that Xiang existed, we must now try to ascertain its location. Peng Yin, the Song commentator of the *Historical Notes*, quotes the assertion of Wei Zhao, a celebrated historiographer and commentator of classical literature who lived in the mid-third century A.D.: 'Xiang region is present-day Rinan' [11, juan 6, 462]. This is the earliest extant document which gives Xiang's location. *The Great Dictionary of Ancient and Modern Chinese Geographical Names* states that Xiang was in south Annan (present-day Vietnam) [14, 156]. An encyclopaedia compiled by Sima Guang in the 11th century specifies that Xiang lay 17,500 *li* from Changan, the Imperial capital [v. 10, juan 7, 242], though unfortunately omitting to say whether this refers to its northern or southern border.

Nevertheless, this data is sufficient to enable us to conclude that Xiang was within the territory of what is now the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Gu Jiegang is obviously

mistaken in placing it on the 13th parallel, as our evidence indicates that it lay considerably further north.

Therefore, by 214 B.C., Chinese regions had been established on territory belonging to the ancestors of the modern-day Vietnamese and in parts of present-day Vietnam. The sources give no direct information on the administration of these areas, though certain oblique references permit us to reconstruct the situation at least approximately. We know that Qin Shi-huang sent a number of senior mandarins—*zhang li*—into the conquered territories [v. 11, juan 113, 4650],<sup>1</sup> and, since senior mandarins were entrusted with the administration of regions and sub-districts in the Qin administrative system, we can assume that the Vietnamese lands were also subdivided. This assumption is further supported by the biography of Zhao Tuo, the ruler of Namviet, a Chinese official who administered the sub-district of Longchuan in Nanhai region during the Qin period [11, juan 113, 4648].

Each region in the Qin Empire was subdivided into sub-districts, rural wards and *tin* (ten communes); the smallest unit of subdivision was the commune—*li*. At that time the *li* were self-governed by elected or hereditary 'father-elders'—*fu lao*. Imperial administration began one rung higher. In Vietnam, it seems, the Chinese did not manage to penetrate beyond the sub-district; local Vietnamese officials or the self-governing communal bodies administered the localities. Therefore a stream of settlers was sent into Vietnam on the heels of the army—a tried and tested tactic widely adopted by the Qin and Han empires (3rd century B.C. to 3rd century A.D.), which Sima Qian records thus: 'And people were sent in order that they should live together with the Vietnamese' [11, juan 113, 2]. The Han scholar Ru Chun gives us to believe that the colonists were from the central areas of the Empire [v. 12, 263]. It seems very likely that Qin Shi-huang followed his normal practice of freeing settlers from civil obligations and according them certain privileges [v. 11, juan 6, 468-479]

<sup>1</sup> As there were insufficient volunteers to fill the demand for mandarins to administer the conquered areas, Qin Shi-huang chose to send negligent mandarin lawyers to Vietnam [v. 11, juan 6, 463]. The fact that he sent lawyers attests to an attempt to introduce the Chinese legal system there.

and that the settlers were given arable land reclaimed from the jungle, the Vietnamese being driven into less fertile areas or into the hills. We can also postulate that Qin Shi-huang tried to create military settlements in the new territories, for, as Sima Qian tells us: 'Qin Shi-huang sent Wei Tuo (Zhao Tuo—*auth.*) over the Five Peaks to attack the Vietnamese.... [Zhao Tuo] sent the Emperor a letter with a request to send 30,000 unmarried women to sew clothes for the warriors. Qin Shi-huang agreed to send 15,000 women' [11, juan 118, 4831-4832].

The establishment of Qin domination and its oppression of the local population naturally whipped up a wave of protest, and as soon as the Chinese people rose against the Qin in 209 B.C., the Vietnamese followed suit. There was a large detachment of Viets from Nanhai and Guilin districts in the insurgent army led by Qing Bu, an escaped convict, who was active in southern China in 207 and 206 B.C. [11, juan 91, 4031].

The Chinese mandarin Zhao Tuo, the former administrator of a sub-district in Nanhai, took advantage of the rising to seize control of the entire district. He killed the Qin mandarins and replaced them with his relatives, members of the Zhao kinship group [v. 11, juan 113, 4650].

Shortly after the collapse of the Qin dynasty in 207 to 206 B.C., Zhao Tuo brought Guilin and Xiang under his control [11, juan 113, 4650], calling himself the ruler—*wang*—of Nanyue [v. 11, juan 113, 4650]. He divided the territory of Aulak into three districts, and, true to his mandarin background, tried to impose a Chinese-style administration system on his domain. As we noted above, he preserved the system of subdivision in Nanhai, but we cannot be sure that he managed to extend it to the more distant regions, notably to Xiang. We assume that at the outset he was short of administrative personnel, for he came to an agreement with the local hereditary aristocracy: in return for guaranteed privileges, they took responsibility for grass-roots administration [v. 4, 222], under the overall control of officials appointed by Zhao Tuo. His appointees included some Viets, since certain of his relatives had married into the local aristocracy.

In Namviet, as in Qin, the population was divided on the ten-fold system for administrative purposes. The offi-

cial's salary depended on rank: the highest rank had the right to take between 600 and 1,000 *dan* of rice (1 *dan* was 103½ litres) per year; the lowest rank was limited to not more than 200 *dan* [v. 4, 222]. In essence this followed the Qin system: even the highest officials did not possess their own lands, but regularly received payment in kind.

During Zhao Tuo's lifetime Namviet conducted a completely independent foreign policy. China was still weak in the first half of the second century B.C. undergoing a painful convalescence after a protracted period of war, with a central authority that was not strong enough to cope with the separatist tendencies of the local Chinese rulers. Therefore Gao Zu, the first Han Emperor, sent Lu Jia, his special emissary, to initiate diplomatic contact with Namviet in 196 B.C. [v. 11, juan 113, 4650]. Moreover, he issued an order which retroactively named Zhao Tuo ruler of Namviet—an obvious attempt to manoeuvre him into a depended position, into a nominal vassalage which would have suited the Han Empire well. Zhao Tuo's reaction is not recorded, but he evidently understood that China was no great threat to him at that time.

Chinese merchants began to deliver agricultural tools and livestock to Namviet [v. 9, 13], in a revival of trade which gave the rulers of China some cause for concern. The Dowager Empress Gao Hou (187-180 B.C.), afraid of feeding Zhao Tuo's growing power, put an embargo on the transport of iron implements from China to Namviet [v. 11, juan 113, 4651]: in this case the embargo appears to have been on Chinese weapons. In reply Zhao Tuo broke off diplomatic relations with China, declared himself Emperor and attacked areas in southern China.

The Emperor Wen Di (179-157 B.C.) adopted the rather more artful approach of playing on Zhao Tuo's patriotic and familial sentiments. He sent people to Zhao Tuo's native area, which lay in the present-day province of Hebei, to care for the family graveyard and sacrifice to Zhao Tuo's ancestors during nationwide ceremonials [v. 15, 61]. This was a wise move on Wen Di's part, since ancestor worship was one of the major precepts of Confucianism. Zhao Tuo and his numerous relatives in their high positions within the administrative structure of Namviet were flattered by the Emperor's personal attention to their ancestors.

Wen Di's next step was to offer costly gifts and administrative posts to those of Zhao Tuo's relatives who had remained in China [v. 15, 61]. We know that in Han China there still existed kinship groups with anything up to several hundred thousand members [v. 5, 93-99], which were bound together by blood and by a common ideology that embraced cult rituals and mutual economic support. They maintained the closest possible links and presented a common front to the world. Zhao Tuo's kinship group could well have contained several hundred adult males.

After Zhao Tuo's death certain of his relatives turned to China for aid in the escalating struggle for the throne. Sima Qian informs us that the *tai hou* (Dowager Empress), the mother of the young Namviet Emperor Xing, appealed to the Han court to help avert a possible coup. With some hope of success—since she herself was Chinese—she asked Wu Di (140-87 B.C.) to put the Namviet rulers on a par with the higher Chinese nobility—the *zhu* and *hou*—and agreed in return to visit the Chinese court once every three years and to open the borders [v. 11, juan 113, 4650]—in other words, to make Namviet a Chinese vassal state. Wu Di, much pleased by the *tai hou*'s proposal, sent his personal seal to the senior Namviet officials—the *chen xiang*, *neishi*, *zhu wei* and *tai fu* [v. 11, juan 113, 4650] and informed the Dowager Empress that she could appoint officials to the other positions as she saw fit [v. 11, juan 113, 4656]. This was clearly an attempt to extend Chinese influence in Namviet by arrogating the right to distribute the higher administrative posts. Simultaneously it was announced that the Han legal system would be introduced and certain Chinese forms of punishment abolished some time previously by Wen Di must be rescinded.

Such blatant interference in internal Namviet affairs outraged Lü Jia, the senior court counsellor, and other highly placed Namviet officials. They rebelled, killed the Dowager Empress, her son, Zhao Xing, and the Han ambassador, who had been accredited to Namviet in 113 B.C.

When his diplomatic initiatives failed, Wu Di resorted to open coercion. In 122 B.C. a Han force, 100,000 strong and divided into several columns, set out for Namviet, and in 111 B.C. two Chinese armies under Lu Bo-de and Yang Pu attacked and captured Panyu (now Guangzhou), the

Namviet capital. Lü Jia and his followers escaped by sea. The Han troops then subdued the country, and it was divided into nine districts.

The captured territories were subjected to a process of sinification, which intensified early in the first century A.D. It involved the establishment of the Chinese administrative system—the subdivision of regions for administrative purposes, the introduction of examinations for all administrative positions, and the imposition of the Chinese tax system. Deopik notes that the Chinese tax system, being based on familial—not communal—responsibility, was more burdensome than that adopted by the early slave-owning states of Aulak and Namviet [v. 3, 158].

In 42-44 A.D. the people, led by Ching Chak and Ching Ni, two sisters of the wealthy Lak family, rose against enforced sinification. Destroying one Han garrison after another, the insurgents liberated 65 fortified points. Ching Chak united Jiaozhi, Jiucheng and Yen-an into an independent kingdom centred on Mieling, and took control of it. Ma Yuan, an experienced Han general, led a huge army against the infant Viet state, and crushed the rising in 44 A.D., despite stubborn resistance and several early defeats.

Tens of thousands of Vietnamese died: in Jiuzhen alone several hundred military leaders and over 5,000 soldiers were executed, hundreds of the more actively oppositionist families were forcibly resettled in China and over 1,000 head of livestock were taken [3, 163]. The Chinese forces also suffered severe losses: between 40 and 50 per cent of Ma Yuan's troops were killed [v. 16, 9].

From 44 A.D. Vietnam lost her independence, and was incorporated into China for several centuries. Though isolated peasant risings did flare up during the second century A.D., they never reached the scale of the great rebellion of 42-44 A.D.



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**NOTES ON SINO-VIETNAMESE  
RELATIONS IN THE THIRD  
TO TENTH CENTURIES A.D.  
(FROM CHINESE SOURCES)**

During the latter years of the Han dynasty China ceased to be a strong centralised state. The Yellow Ribbon rebellion, a peasant rising led by a Taoist sect in 184 A.D., was instrumental in bringing down the house of Han. The prolonged and bloody feudal struggle for power which followed did not directly encroach upon Viet territory.

In the mid-first century A.D., in the course of an administrative reform, all the Namviet lands conquered by the Chinese in the 2nd century B.C. were incorporated into the region of Jiaozhou,<sup>1</sup> which was divided into nine districts, which were then further subdivided. Jiaozhou's capital was in Panyue (now Guangzhou province).

At the turn of the 2nd century A.D. the Shi, a Chinese family, were particularly powerful in Viet land. Shi Xie (Si Niep) ruled Jiaozhi district for 40 years (from 187 to 226 A.D.) and in 203 A.D. three of his brothers became responsible for administering three neighbouring districts: Hepu and Nanhai to the north and Jiuzhen to the south. The Shi family thus controlled almost all the Viet lands.

Shi Xie took advantage of the attenuation of Imperial power and the political crisis in China to strengthen his own

<sup>1</sup> The Chinese sources, even when referring to the period after the reform, often use 'Jiaozhi' and 'Jiaozhou' interchangeably. As the Viet land had been called Jiaozhi by the Chinese up to the mid-first century A.D., it is sometimes difficult to determine which area is referred to. To complicate matters further, one of the districts of Jiaozhou was named Jiaozhi.

position.<sup>1</sup> Fugitives from the feudal civil wars in China who settled in Jiaozhou during Shi Xie's administration—continuing a long established emigrant tradition<sup>2</sup>—included members of the feudal nobility, peasants driven from their lands when two armies clashed, and scholars. The sources indicate that Shi Xie gave the scholars a particularly warm welcome [v. 6, juan 4, 4687-4688].

Wishing to popularise Chinese culture among the Viet ruling classes [v. 18, 107], he made a consistent effort to introduce the Chinese administrative system throughout his domain. This, of course, is why feudal Chinese historians praised him so highly.

In the early 3rd century China's internal crisis led to the formation of three states: Wei, Shu and Wu. In 220 A.D. Cao Pei declared himself Emperor of Wei, and took the name of Wen-di [6, juan 2, 4653, 7a; 4654, 8a].

Sun Quan, the first ruler of Wu, temporarily subjected himself to Cao Pei, and in return was named *wang* of Wu and ruler of Jingzhou and Jiaozhou [6, juan 2, 4653, 7b]. Jiaozhou was thus incorporated into the kingdom of Wu, in south-east China, where it remained for the next 60 years until 280 A.D.

In 211 A.D. Sun Quan had appointed Bu Zhi as *ci-shi* of Jiaozhou and recognised Shi Xie's power in Jiaozhi, obviously being eager to keep on good terms with such a powerful and influential man. We can assume, however, that Sun Quan was himself in a strong position, given that Shi Xie—whose departures from home were accompanied by music from bells, drums, pipes and flutes and the burning of incense [6, juan 4, 4688, 10a] just as if he were a sovereign ruler—was forced, along with his brothers, to greet Bu Zhi, their superior in the mandarin hierarchy, and receive from him the regalia which confirmed his appointment [6, juan 4, 4688, 11a]. Despite having received honorary titles from Sun Quan on more than one occasion, Shi Xie was still obliged

<sup>1</sup> Shi Xie's biography in *Wu zhi*, the history of the Shi dynasty, details the honours he enjoyed. His suite of retainers and the lavish ceremonial which attended his departure from home indicate that his power exceeded that of the average district administrator [v. 6, juan 4, 4687].

<sup>2</sup> One such influx had occurred during the reforms of Wang Mang (mid-first century A.D.), which were unpopular with many people.

to send his son to Wu as a hostage [6, juan 4, 4688, 11a].

Shi Xie, for his part, was continuing his policy to sinify the territory and win the local nobility to his side [6, juan 4, 4688, 11a]. But he did not omit to send 'each time to (Sun) Quan all kinds of aromatic (plants), lianas,<sup>1</sup> always several thousand of them at a time, the pearls of high lustre, large sea-shells, kingfishers, tortoise shells, rhinoceroses, elephants, pearls, wonderful objects, unusual fruits, bananas, longyan.<sup>2</sup> Not a year went by when (Shi) Yi did not send several hundred horses as tribute' [6, juan 4, 4688, 11a].

Shi Xie died in 226 A.D., at the age of 90. He had been regent of Jiaozhi for 40 years.

Sun Quan, meanwhile, was watching Jiaozhou carefully, intending to consolidate his own power there. In 226 A.D., the year of Shi Xie's death, he subdivided Jiaozhou naming the two new regions Guangzhou and Jiaozhou.<sup>3</sup> He gave Lü Dai control over Guangzhou and appointed Dai Liang as *ci-shi* of Jiaozhou. None of this, however, was actually put into effect for Shi Hui, Shi Xie's son, usurped power in Jiaozhi, and refused entrance to both Dai Liang and Chen Shi, who had been appointed *tai-shou* of Jiaozhi. Shi Hui defended his position for several months, until defeated by a Chinese army sent by Sun Quan and led by Lü Dai: the unexpectedness of the attack and the cunning of the Chinese commander were the sole factors that overcame Shi Hui. He and his relatives were captured and beheaded—indeed, Lü Dai executed every member of the house of Shi, afraid of the popularity they enjoyed thanks to Shi Xie's long and able administration. But the disruptions continued; Lü Dai next routed Gan Li and Bo Zhi, two of Shi Hui's military commanders [6, juan 15, 4785, 9a]. Guangzhou was then reunited with Jiaozhou [6, juan 15, 4785, 9a] and Lü Dai took control of both.

His governorship was punctuated by rebellions in the southern districts. He mounted a punitive expedition against

<sup>1</sup> *Ge* (*Pyraria hirsuta*), a kind of climbing vine.

<sup>2</sup> *Nephelium longana*.

<sup>3</sup> The districts to the north of Hepu were incorporated into Guangzhou; the districts to the south became Jiaozhou [6, juan 4, 4688, 11b]. Sima Guang tells us that Guangzhou contained four districts: Canwu, Nanhai, Yulin and Hepu, and that Jiaozhou contained three: Jiaozhi, Jiuzhen and Rinan [11, juan 70, 2231].

Jiuzhen, and crushed the rising there ruthlessly: tens of thousands of Viets were killed or taken prisoner. This prompted Sun Quan to bestow on him the title of 'the commander who subjugated the south'—*zhen-nan jian-jun* [6, juan 15, 4785, 9a].

Lü Dai administered the subdued region until 231 A.D., when he was recalled [6, juan 15, 4785, 9a-9b].

Lü Dai's activities in Viet territory can be compared in scope with Qin Shi-huang's conquest of Viet lands, with Wu-di's expansion in the 3rd century B.C. and Ma Yuan's punitive expedition in 42 to 44 A.D. Subsequently active Chinese interest in the states of the Indochina south of Jiaozhou abated, and though certain Chinese generals got as far as the Cham capital—Liu Fang, for example, in 602 A.D.—this was not part of concerted policy. With the withdrawal of the Chinese army, power reverted to the local rulers.

Jiaozhou was high on Sun Quan's list of priorities, since he set great store by the goods that came from that region [6, juan 2, 4655, 10b]. He was therefore not prepared to accept independence of action on the part of the governors there and approved those who handled the local population ruthlessly.

The reign of Sun Quan—indeed, the entire period of the Three kingdoms—was an uneasy time. The *wang* of Wu was forced into yearly campaigns against both his rivals, the *wangs* of Wei and Shu, and local insurgents. Yet he still found time to conduct an active foreign policy, and Jiaozhou was one of his major interests, since some of Wu's arterial trade routes passed through that region. After pacifying Jiuzhen, Lü Dai sent out ambassadors to spread knowledge of Wu's 'majesty and will' southwards to Funan,<sup>1</sup> Linyi and Tangling.<sup>2</sup> Reciprocal missions were sent bearing tribute.

But Jiaozhou did not remain quiet for long. Neither the cruelty of the Chinese generals sent to subdue the local population nor the traditional Chinese policy of

<sup>1</sup> For further details, [23, 248-251].

<sup>2</sup> Hu San-xing states in his commentary that 'Tangling was Daomingguo to the north of Zhenla' [11, juan 70, 2332]. S. Nairo, the Japanese scholar, believes that Tangling was the state of Daomingguo, which lay to the north of Zhenla (Kampuchea) and to the west of Huanzhou (the Chinese name for Ngean) [16, 73].

winning over the local nobility could break Viet resistance or prevent risings against the occupying forces.

Lü Dai twice had to return to Jiaozhou at the head of a military expedition: in 235 A.D. to put down disturbances in several districts, including Nanhai [6, juan 15, 4785, 9b] and again in 240 A.D. to pacify Lingling, Cangwu and Yulin [6, juan 15, 4786, 10a].

In 248 A.D. there was an anti-Chinese rising in Jiuzhen and Jiaozhi; our only information on it is that 'the barbarians—brigands from Jiaozhi and Jiuzhen—attacked the towns [and] all [the region of] Jiao was in turmoil' [6, juan 16, 4797, 13b; 11, juan 75, 2375]. Le Thanh Khoi, basing himself on later Vietnamese sources, states that the rising led by a woman called Chiyewu Awu, held out against the Chinese troops for six months. Three hundred years later a temple was built in her honour [19, 144].

The rising was suppressed by Lu Yin, who then became the governor of Jiaozhou [v. 6, juan 16, 4797; 11, juan 75, 2375], and set out to introduce the Chinese administration system there. He maintained a huge army to deal with local disturbances and mobilised the population for his military campaigns: 'During the entire period [of his governorship] he mobilised over 8,000 people' [6, juan 16, 4797]. At the same time he tried to attract the local nobility to his side. 'He called the warlords of Gaoliang (a mountain district—*auth.*), Huang and Wu with their followers, a total of 3,000 families' [6, juan 16, 4797]. Later, as he proceeded southwards, he won over 'more than 100 warlords and more than 50,000 families' [6, juan 16, 4797]<sup>1</sup> with lavish gifts.

It seems that the Chinese court was pleased with Lu Yin's policy of introducing the Chinese administration system, of 'explaining the mercy of the court' [6, juan 16, 4798, 14a] and of keeping large forces at the ready, for he was awarded honorary titles several times during his ten-year governorship, and was also promoted in the administrative hierarchy.

In the years of Yungan (258-263 A.D.), under the designation Sun Siu (258-263 A.D.) of the kingdom of Wu

<sup>1</sup> These figures, although almost certainly not precise, give some idea of the large numbers of local nobility who went over to the Chinese side.

(258-264 A.D.), the ruler of Jiaozhi was Sun Xu, a man notorious for his greed and cruelty. The people were particularly indignant when he ordered that over 1,000 artisans be sent to Jiangye, the capital of Wu [6, juan 3, 4673, 12a]. The *wang* of Wu dispatched Deng Xun to look into the causes of the disturbances in Jiaozhi, but his arrival in 263 A.D. sparked off another rising whose root cause was a supplementary requisition of 3,000 peacocks for Sun Xu's court [11, juan 78, 2466; 12, juan 57, 5230, 4b]. Under the leadership of Lü Xing, a petty official, the insurgents killed Sun Xu and Deng Xun and captured Jiuzhen and Rinan [6, juan 3, 4673, 12a]. Internecine conflicts in China itself did much to further the rebels' cause, for at that time the house of Jin was at war with Wu. Wu lost control of Jiaozhou for several years.

As the sources only list the names of the insurgent leadership, it is difficult to establish their nationality: we know only that they were officials who occupied low positions in the civil and military hierarchy; some of them were therefore certainly of Viet extraction. They took advantage of local discontent to pursue their separatist ends. But the Chinese were quick to exploit the discord between them.

The rising evidently motivated the *wang* of Wu to divide Jiaozhou into two regions, Jiaozhou—which contained the five districts of Hepu (within the present-day province of Guangdong), Zhuyai (the island of Hainan), Jiaozhi, Jiuzhen and Rinan—and Guangzhou, which encompassed the four districts of Nanhai, Cangwu, Yulin and Gaoliang [v. 12, juan 15, 4944, 8b].<sup>1</sup> Jiaozhou's administrative centre was in Longbian and Guangzhou's in Panyu.

This administrative reform was partly motivated by the fact that the Viet lands were in the hands of insurgents who had several times repulsed the Wu army [11, juan 79, 2508]; the huge region had also proved extremely difficult to administer. The division was thus intended to make it easier to deal with the rebels and to strengthen China's position within Viet territory.

<sup>1</sup> The first attempts to divide this large region had been undertaken by Lü Dai in 226 A.D. He suggested to the Emperor that 'the three districts to the south of the sea [be separated out] as Jiaozhou district and the four districts to the east of the sea as Guangzhou' [11, juan 70, 2231; 6, juan 4, 4688; 6, juan 15, 4785].



The Chinese governor then moved from Panyu, the administrative centre of Guangzhou, and settled with his officials in Longbian, within Viet territory.

In 271 A.D. Tao Huang was put in charge of Jiaozhou, which at that time was held by the rebels. He was faced with a long, hard struggle to assert his power. Besides using direct military force, he showered gifts on the local nobility to gain their favour. 'He presented riches which had previously been seized [and kept] on the ships—several thousand pieces of silk—to Liang Qi from Fuyan, the leader of the brigands, and in return Liang Qi sent several thousand men to help [Tao] Huang' [12, juan 57, 5231, 5a].

Tao Huang had to adopt all kinds of subterfuges in addition to open bribery to break the stubborn resistance of the local people: that is more than likely why contemporary historians called him an 'adroit strategist' [12, juan 57, 5231, 5a].

In the summer of 271 A.D. Tao Huang took Jiuzhen [v. 11, 2515]. His biographer summarises his campaigns thus: 'Wuping, Jiude and Xinchang<sup>1</sup> are difficult to penetrate. The Lao barbarians are strong and fierce. They had never surrendered throughout [their] history. [Tao] Huang conducted a punitive expedition. He formed three districts [on] their [territory]' [12, juan 57, 5231, 5b].

The Western Jin defeated Wu decisively in 280 A.D., bringing a temporary pause in the discord in southern China. The new Emperor confirmed Tao Huang as governor of Jiaozhou [v. 12, juan 57, 5231, 5b].

As Tao Huang extended his power it became obvious that he needed a large force to hold the areas he had captured. He had begun his operations with 7,000 soldiers, but encounters with the enemy and the dreadful climate had reduced the army to little over one third of its original size—which is why he chose not to obey an Imperial command to reduce his forces [v. 11, juan 81, 2575].<sup>2</sup> More-

<sup>1</sup> These sub-districts lay approximately on the border between North and Central Vietnam. As the names of sub-districts often changed and different areas were sometimes called by the same name, it is practically impossible to pinpoint their location more closely.

<sup>2</sup> The Imperial order was apparently motivated by the fact that the maintenance of troops was extremely costly, especially in such peripheral regions as Jiaozhou.

over, he explained to the Emperor the need to maintain a large force in Jiaozhou, stating that he had served in the south for ten years and that 'though he had conducted numerous punitive campaigns, had killed their (the barbarians'—*auth.*) ringleaders, yet brigands still hide in the deep ravines' [12, juan 57, 5231, 6a]. 'Now, when the country is united, no one even thinks of disobeying. It is time to lay down our arms, take off our armour and busy ourselves with ritual and music. But in Jiaozhou few people understand virtue. They do not love a peaceful, happy life, but love to foment evil and disorder ... only with the help of troops can [they] be held in subjection' [12, juan 57, 5231, 6a].

He realised, however, that it would hardly be possible to hold his position by force of arms alone; existing economic policies would also have to be changed. He made the following suggestion, which was approved by the Emperor: 'Since the land in Hepu is poor and there are no fields under cultivation, the people only fish for pearls. Traders come and go, the inhabitants receive rice for their pearls. In the time of [the kingdom of ] Wu, it was forbidden to barter pearls. They feared that the people would squander the pearls. They forbade the merchants to go [to them], and as a result the people began to starve [;] the taxes were very great and often they went unpaid. I suggest that henceforth two thirds of the tax be taken in first-class pearls, one third in second-class pearls. And that the worst sort not be taken at all. From the twelfth moon to the second moon is not a time for good pearls. [I suggest that] the merchants [be] permitted to come during that time, as before' [12, juan 57, 5231, 6a].

Thus the lot of the inhabitants of Hepu was eased without harming the interests of the Chinese government.

At the beginning of the 4th century, after Tao Huang's death, a rising in Jiuzhen was suppressed by Wu Yan, the new governor [v. 12, juan 57, 5232, 7a-b].

These numerous risings, large and small, indicate that the Chinese administration was more or less secure only in the larger garrison towns and that elsewhere Chinese power existed only in name. Therefore, the Viet elite had little difficulty in encouraging the discontents among the local people to rebel. Tao Huang's petition to the Emperor stands

as evidence: 'Over 50,000 households do not submit to China.... Only something over 5,000 families fulfill their duties and pay their taxes' [12, juan 57, 5231, 6a].

The weakening of central power in China during the 4th and 5th centuries allowed the local Viet aristocracy to strengthen their position. Whereas previously the Chinese had used the nobility only in local administration, Viets were subsequently appointed to high positions increasingly often. The sources show that in certain cases rulers of districts, and even of regions, were appointed according to the express wishes of the local inhabitants. The course of events in Vietnam itself in the early 4th century and the latter half of the 5th century give further proof of the shift in the balance of power in civil and military circles: our sources for those periods are full of descriptions of military operations in this disunited country that was undergoing its own 'Time of Troubles' when, after Tao Huang's death, governors followed each other in rapid succession, more or less untrammelled by central government control [12, juan 57, 5231, 5b, 6b].

In 315 A.D., a native called Luong Than (Liang Shuo in Chinese), one of the military commanders of Jiaozhou, taking advantage of the internecine feuds, the vitiation of the central government and the discontent of the local people, seized power in the region [11, juan 89, 2824], and began to transfer and appoint officials—whose authority was purely nominal—on his own initiative.

A Chinese called Wang Ji,<sup>1</sup> the first to challenge Liang Shuo, did so unsuccessfully [12, juan 100, 5522, 11b].

Liang Shuo is said to have killed all the Chinese in the region for fear that they might support his rival; he then declared himself governor [v. 12, juan 100, 5522, 11b], although in fact he was no less than a local dictator.

Wang Liang, a Chinese military commander, was sent to deal with Liang Shuo in 322 A.D. [11, juan 92, 2908]. In an attempt to undermine his enemy, Wang Liang enticed Xiu Zhan, a local official and one of Liang Shuo's protégés, to his house and had him killed. Liang Shuo reacted with what was effectively a declaration of war: he mustered a strong

<sup>1</sup> The source calls Wang Ji a rebel, since he had previously usurped power in Guangzhou [v. 12, juan 100, 5522, 11b].

force and surrounded Wang Liang in Longbian, the seat of the Chinese regent. Defeated, Wang Liang ran away, with Liang Shuo in pursuit, eager to seize the *jie*,<sup>1</sup> the symbol of authority; he finally did so when he cut off Wang Liang's hand. The Chinese general died shortly afterwards [12, juan 89, 5437, 14b].

Tao Kan, the governor of Guangzhou, sent an army headed by Gao Bao, to help Wang Liang, but it arrived too late, and it was not until 323 A.D. that Gao Bao finally defeated Liang Shuo, and sent his severed head to the capital [12, juan 89, 5437, 14b]. Gao Bao was killed on his way home. For seven years—until 330 A.D. [11, juan 94, 2976]—Tao Kan was *ci-shi* of Jiaozhou [11, juan 92, 2912], administering the region from Guangzhou.

During the first half of the 4th century the central authority was weakened by conflicts between groups of feudal lords and their retainers. Apart from mentioning the appointment of governors [11, juan 95, 2994], the sources make no reference to Jiaozhou during this entire period. There are cases when one man was put in charge of five [11, juan 103, 3263] or even seven [11, juan 97, 3056; juan 104, 3282] separate areas. Whole pages of the sources, however, are devoted to descriptions of the conflicts within China itself.

The paucity of references to Jiaozhou suggests that the internal crisis occupied the Imperial court to the exclusion of all outside interests. And it seems that a similar power struggle was going on in Jiaozhou too, while the state of Linyi, taking advantage of this situation, attacked the region several times, beginning in or around 248 A.D. [2, 71]. The conflict between Jiaozhou and Linyi escalated in the mid-fourth century, as Linyi challenged China for control of the southern areas of Jiaozhou, with varying success. This confrontation was interspersed with disturbances within Jiaozhou itself. For example, Li Sun, the *tai-shou* of Jiuzhen, launched a rebellion in 380 A.D. [11, juan 104, 3297]; only after eight months did Du Yuan, the new ruler of Jiuzhen, capture Li Sun and have him be-

<sup>1</sup> A kind of sceptre which was presented to regional rulers at the time of their appointment. It also served as credentials for Chinese mandarins heading embassies to foreign countries.

headed. Then 'the region of Jiaozhou was pacified' [11, juan 104, 3298].

There was little change in the situation during the following period. 'In the years of Yi-si (405-418 A.D.) [Linyi] made yearly attacks on Rinan, Jiuzhen and Jiude' [12, juan 97, 5497, 10a].

In 411 A.D. Lu Xun, the ruler of Yongjia district (now within Zhejiang province), made a bid for control of Yulin, Cangwu and other districts, but was defeated and forced to retreat to Jiaozhou, where he made contact with Li Sun's followers, attracted members of the local tribes into his army and fell on Longbian. Du Hui-du, the regent of Jiaozhou, took the field against him, and set fire to his fleet by tying burning brands to pheasants' tails. Simultaneously a hail of arrows descended on Lu Xun's troops from both banks of the river, and they fled. Seeing that disaster was inevitable, Lu Xun sent his wife and children away, then, having killed those of his servants and concubines who refused to die voluntarily with him, he threw himself into the river. Du Hui-du retrieved the corpse, and sent its severed head to Jiangkang (Huangzhou) [21, juan 3645-3646].

Du Hui-du beat off attacks from Linyi in 413 and 415 A.D. In 420 he went on the offensive and won a decisive and bloody victory [11, juan 119, 3736].

Because of the internal conflict in China, the Imperial government could not exercise any firm control over Jiaozhou in the 4th and 5th centuries; governors with real authority were rare indeed. Meanwhile, the power struggle in Jiaozhou and its confrontations with Linyi put a heavy burden onto the Viet people, though the Viet ruling elite benefited from the situation, as it allowed them to strengthen their own position.

In 469 A.D. a Viet named Ly Truong Nhanh (Li Changren in Chinese) initiated a rising, destroyed the Chinese garrison and declared himself ruler of Jiaozhou [11, juan 132, 4144; 10, juan 8, 5788; 5, juan 57, 7608]. The Chinese authorities were in no position to protest, and when he sent an ambassador to the Imperial court asking for forgiveness and permission to act as plenipotentiary in the region, the Emperor was obliged to accede to his request [11, juan 132, 4146].

After Li Chang-ren's death, his cousin Li Thuc Hien (Li Shu-xian) succeeded him and sent a similar proposal to the Imperial court in 479 A.D. But instead the Emperor appointed Shen Huan as regent of Jiaozhou, offering Li Shu-xian the posts of military aide to Shen Huan and *tai-shou* of Wuping and Xinchang districts. Li Shu-xian, already securely established in Jiaozhou, sent out an army against Shen Huan, blocking his way in Yulin district. At that point the Emperor had no choice but to confirm Li Shu-xian as governor [11, juan 135, 4230; 5, juan 58, 7608, 15b].

The Imperial missive sent to Li Shu-xian mentioned the fact that Jiaozhou had never accepted the Chinese calendar.<sup>1</sup> 'Now there has been a break with the past. Jiaozhou must be forgiven [and Li] Shu-xian appointed governor so that he might rule the southern land in peace' [11, juan 135, 4230]. The Chinese court also had to take local anti-Chinese feeling into account and accept the possibility that Viets might be appointed to administrative positions. 'We condescendingly forgive the faults of Li Shu-xian. The southern lands can be at peace: it is necessary to choose people [for] civil and military [offices][and] after verifying their capabilities, to appoint them' [5, juan 2, 7114, 6a].

Thus buttressed by Imperial recognition, Li Shu-xian began to hold up the tribute which crossed Jiaozhou in large quantities on its way from the countries of the South Seas to China [5, juan 58, 7608, 15b; 11, juan 136, 4265]. Liu Kai was named *ci-shi* and set out to punish him. Li Shu-xian tried to buy off the Emperor, sending him peacock feathers, and 12 suits of armour and helmets of pure silver, but without success. Li Shu-xian then made for the capital by a roundabout route to avoid meeting his pursuers [5, juan 58, 7608, 16a; 11, juan 136, 4265]. That journey marked the end of his career.

But in 490 A.D. the Emperor was once more obliged to ratify a Viet seizure of power. Fuc Dang Chi (Fu Deng-zhi) had been one of the most trusted aides of Fang Fa-cheng, the governor of Jiaozhou, whose poor health prevented him from fulfilling his duties. While Fang Fa-cheng spent his

<sup>1</sup> The Chinese calendar was accepted by those states which China had brought within her sphere of influence. Li Chang-ren, in refusing to accept it, had symbolically rejected Chinese domination.

time reading, Fu Deng-zhi gradually usurped power and began to make changes in the civil and military administrative system on his own initiative. When Fang Fa-cheng finally realised what was happening, he had Fu Deng-zhi thrown into a dungeon. The insubordinate aide bribed his way out in no time, however, seized the entire region and imprisoned his former superior. The Emperor was forced to declare Fu Deng-zhi ruler of Jiaozhou [11,juan 137, 4302].

Further proof of Imperial weakness and inability to control the distant Viet lands is found in a report made by a mandarin called Liu Sheng-ming to an Emperor of the Liang dynasty (502-556 A.D.). 'Jiaozhou is in a dangerous place,' he wrote. 'At the end of the Song dynasty the government [became] cruel, which prompted discontent and treason. Now great changes are taking place and a new beginning is on hand. It is advisable to take care to show grace and virtue. It is not advisable to send military commanders and soldiers on distant expeditions [;] the local people should not be disturbed. Moreover, this land produces only pearls and precious stones, [and so] is not vital to a wise court. Military operations should be temporarily halted.' The Emperor accepted these recommendations [v. 5,juan 28, 7364, 12b; 11,juan 135, 4226].

Yet the weakness of the central authority was not the only cause of the Viet nobility's successes: they were actively supported by the local inhabitants, who hated being dominated by foreigners. The Viet elite quickly gained control of Jiaozhou and drove out the Chinese governors, who, in order to carry out their policy, had been forced to maintain large forces consisting primarily of Chinese soldiers. Though most of the troops were local Chinese residents, the Chinese governors often brought their own contingents with them when they were appointed. Therefore the first target of Viet risings was always the Chinese garrison.

One other fact worth emphasising is that from the 3rd to the 5th centuries Jiaozhou was gradually reduced in size, as its southern areas were taken over by Linyi and its northern sector was redistributed among other Chinese regions in the course of frequent territorial reorganisation [v. 10,juan 38, 5791]. By 471 A.D. Jiaozhou's northern border was the same as that of the Socialist Republic of

Vietnam today.

But simultaneously Jiaozhou itself was reorganised, so that by the Jin era—that is, by about 270 A.D.—though the region was two-thirds smaller than it had been under the Han, the number of districts and sub-districts it contained, was greater.

During the early 6th century A.D., under the Liang dynasty, this process of repartition continued. Jiaozhou was divided into eight regions, which were barely as big as the former districts. The district of Rinan,<sup>1</sup> for example, was divided into Lizhou, Mingzhou and Dezhou. This and similar administrative reforms represent a Chinese attempt to secure the governors' authority. But the Viet thirst for independence only grew.

In 541 A.D. Li Bi led a rising in Jiaozhou [v. 14, juan 1, 8113; 3, juan 2, 7672; 11, juan 158, 4909]<sup>2</sup> against Xiao Zi, the cruel Chinese governor [v. 14, juan 1, 8113]. Backed by discontents in the Viet ruling circles, the rising made rapid headway. The Chinese governor fled [v. 11, juan 158, 4909].

The first Chinese attempts to counteract the rising failed: the commanders were indecisive, the army disintegrated and the Viets had no difficulty in beating off the small Chinese contingents that tried to engage them [11, juan 158, 4909, 4912; 3, juan 3, 3672, 26b]. The Chinese court

<sup>1</sup> 'In speaking of Rinan we do not mean the Rinan of the Han era which became part of Linyi. The Han Rinan lay far to the south of the Heshan mountains, but, as the Chinese transferred the name further northwards, the original location was gradually forgotten. The Rinan to which we now refer was north of the Heshan mountains' [2, 232].

<sup>2</sup> We have reason to believe that Li Bi's ancestors migrated to Jiaozhou in the time of the Western Han. The *Dai viet shi toan thi* states: 'The Emperor, [whose] surname was Li and given name Bi, was a native of Longxing. His ancestors from the north suffered from military campaigns at the end of the Han, moved to the southern lands and after seven generations had become southerners. [He] has literary and military talent; the Emperor's family has been a distinguished one from generation to generation and has displayed talent, but he was unfortunate in service' [4, 26, cf. 19]. Thus we see that Li Bi was a member of the Viet ruling class. 'Li Bi from Jiaozhou [his ancestors] from generation to generation belonged to the nobility but he did not achieve his aims in service' [11, 4909]. Before the rising, Li Bi had held a minor administrative post in Dezhou. Hu San-xing's commentary to Sima Guang's book tells us that Dezhou was Rinan's southernmost district during the Liang era [v. 11, juan 158, 4909].



appealed to Linyi for help [2, 86] but 'in summer, in the fourth year of the *wang*, Li Bi dealt a blow to Linyi. Fan Xiu, Li Bi's general, destroyed [the army of] Linyi at Jiude' [11, juan 158, 4918].<sup>1</sup>

The relative ease and speed with which Li Bi won these victories indicates that he had the support of the entire Viet people, who had suffered enough under the foreign occupation. Li Bi took control of the whole region from early 544 A.D., when he captured Longbian, the seat of the Chinese administration in Jiaozhou. His authority extended southwards to the frontier with Linyi, encompassing the district of Dezhou, and northwards to the mountain areas inhabited by the Lao tribes—that is along the upper reaches of the Hong Ha (Red River) and the Loi, and encompassing present-day Lang Son.

In the first moon of 544 A.D., Li Bi declared himself Emperor of the Li dynasty that was later known as the Early Li. He issued a directive reorganising his administrative personnel, gave a designation to the years of his rule—*Da de* [11, juan 158, 4920]—for the first time in Viet history, named his state Van Suan (in Chinese *Wan chun*—'Ten thousand springs') [14a, juan 1, 9], built a residence which he called 'Eternal longevity'—*Wan shou dian*.<sup>2</sup> But China did not give him time to create a state structure.

In the summer of the following year the Imperial court appointed Yang Piao *ci-shi* and dispatched a large force under Chen Ba-xian, one of the most brilliant generals of his time [11, juan 159, 4928]. He marched out of Panyu [14, juan 1, 8113, 3a] to meet up with Yang Piao and Xiao Bo, the *ci-shi* of Dingzhou, near the Xijiang River. A council of war was held there. Xiao Bo, terrified of the impending campaign, did all he could to persuade Yan Piao to call it off, but Chen Ba-xian stood firm. Yang Piao appointed him commander of the front-line forces, and he moved out to take on Li Bi and his 30,000-strong army [11, juan 159, 4928]. Their first encounter—in Zhuyuan (Chudien in

<sup>1</sup> Jiude, a southern district of Jiaozhou, had been created from the district of Jiuzhen during the Wu period. Under the Liang the district was named Dezhou.

<sup>2</sup> These details appeared for the first time in the Vietnamese source *Dai viet shiki toan thi*. See Maspéro and Durand [22, 4; 15a, 441] for translations.

Vietnamese)<sup>1</sup>—was Li Bi's first defeat. He withdrew to the Hong Ha and tried to establish a fortified position there. The *History of the Chen Dynasty* states: 'In the eleventh year [of Da-tong] in the sixth moon (July 545 A.D.) the army reached Jiaozhou. The army of Li Bi, which numbered some tens of thousands of soldiers, encamped at the mouth of the River Suli<sup>2</sup> and set up a palisade to defend itself against the government troops (the Chinese army—*auth.*)' [14, juan 1, 8113, 3a]. But the fortifications proved useless, and the Viet army again had to retreat westwards, towards Zidin (Jianing).<sup>3</sup> On 25 February 546, after a two-month siege, the town fell [11, juan 159, 4936]. Li Bi escaped and hid in the mountains to the north-west, among the Lao tribes [11, juan 159, 4936-4937], where he mustered an army of 20,000 and marched it to Lake Dianchenghu. There he began to build enough ships to 'fill the whole lake' [11, juan 159, 4940], preparing to answer the Chinese in kind.

The Chinese forces arrived shortly afterwards, exhausted by the long campaign and the oppressive climate and dreading the coming battle. Chen Ba-xiang called a council of war, at which he advised against delay. 'Our troops have been campaigning for a long time, they are tired.... Besides, we are isolated and are receiving no help. We have penetrated deeply into the territory of the enemy. If we are not victorious in one battle, can we hope to preserve our lives? We must consider that [the enemy] has borne many defeats and that the spirit of [his] people is not strong, [that] the [tribes] of Yi and Lao are a haphazard mob. It is easy to break them' [14, juan 1, 8113, 3b; 11, juan 159, 4940]. The commanders present heard out Chen Ba-xiang's speech in silence.

During the night the level of the river rose sharply, and it began to flow swiftly into the lake. Chen Ba-xiang chose this moment to launch his attack. Shouting and beating on drums to rouse their courage, the troops descended on the lake. Li Bi's army, caught by surprise, was com-

<sup>1</sup> Maspéro maintains that Zhuyuan was some 50 *li* from Longbian, the capital [v. 20, 582].

<sup>2</sup> The Suli is a tributary of the Red River. The fortifications were built where the two rivers met—that is, on the site of present-day Hanoi [v. 20, 581].

<sup>3</sup> On the location of Jianing [20, 584].

pletely destroyed. Li Bi again escaped to the mountains [14, juan 1, 8113, 3b; 11, juan 159, 4940], but the Lao, preferring to stay on peaceful terms with the Chinese, killed him and sent his head to Chen Ba-xian [14, juan 1, 8113, 3b; 11, juan 161, 4977].

Chen Ba-xian subsequently defeated Li Thien Bao, Li Bi's elder brother, with the remainder of the insurgent army at Aizhou [14, juan 1, 8113, 3b; 11, juan 161, 4977].

Such is the story of Li Bi's rising, as told by the Chinese sources and the *Viet li luoc* and the *Annam chi luoc*, two of the earliest extant Vietnamese sources.

However, a Vietnamese tradition based on the *Dai viet shi ki toan thi* holds that there were two further claimants to the throne of *Wan chun*: Li Fa Ti (Li Fu-zi in Chinese), one of Li Thien Bao's generals, and Trieu Quang Phuc.

Scholarly opinion is divided on this point. Some historians discuss the risings of Li Bi and Li Fa Ti but refuse to accept Trieu Quang Phuc as a historical figure. Others claim that the Early Li dynasty lasted from 543 to 602 A.D., that Trieu Quang Phuc succeeded Li Bi following Chen Ba-xian's victory in 545 A.D. and that Li Thien Bao, Li Bi's elder brother, founded the state of Danang, further to the south.<sup>1</sup>

In 1916, Maspéro researched this question thoroughly, comparing Chinese sources written shortly after the event, most of which are fully reliable, with Vietnamese documents, and discovering that the account of Trieu Quang Phuc's confrontation with Li Fa Ti appeared for the first time during the 14th century. He comments that the sources contradict each other, some stating that the Chinese were defeated, others, that they won [22,2]. The references to Li Bi in the *Dai viet shi ki toan thi*, which quotes from Sima Guang's work almost word for word, gives dates and specifies the battle sites. References to Trieu Quang

<sup>1</sup> M. L. Cadière, basing himself on Vietnamese sources, includes the Early Li in his chronological table [v. 15]. Huard and Durand hold that during this obscure period 'the Chinese secured their position, in spite of a series of ephemeral and sometimes rival Vietnamese dynasties' [17, 21]. The only Li Emperor Le Thanh Khoi considers is Li Bi [v. 18, 119-120]. Harold C. Hinton also described the series of Vietnamese risings against Chinese control which converged in Li Bi's rising of 543-544 A.D., though he notes that before long North Vietnam was again subdued by the armies of the Liang dynasty [16, 14].

Phuc, however, are far more fragmentary: we are told that he attacked Chen Ba-xiang from a fortified position in the impenetrable marshes of Nhachdadrach, that Chen Ba-xiang was recalled to China and Trieu Quang Phuc defeated his replacement, and that he based himself in Longbian. Instead of concrete facts and the names of battle sites we are regaled with details of Trieu Quang Phuc's helmet, to which was attached a magic talisman—a dragon's claw—and which helped him in his conflict with Li Fa Ti for control over the divided kingdom. But Li Fa Ti's son married Trieu Quang Phuc's favourite daughter and exchanged claw for one without magic properties, upon which Trieu Quang Phuc's army lost its fighting spirit. Realising what had happened he retreated southwards and disappeared without trace in the sea, along with his favourite daughter.<sup>1</sup>

Maspéro studied all the sources which predated the *Dai viet*, and concluded that this legend, like many others in Viet history, was religious in origin, that it arose in the early 14th century<sup>2</sup> and gained wide credence fairly quickly, being taken up by the official historiographers at the end of the 15th century. He emphasises, however, that it is a distant echo of an ancient Vietnamese folk tale which relates to the time of the legendary ruler An Duong and has no basis whatever in historical fact [22, 19].

Li Bi's rising, although ultimately unsuccessful, should not be lightly dismissed, since it involved various strata and classes of the Viet population. Indeed, so profound was anti-Chinese feeling (especially among the poorer Viets, who suffered both from local feudal exploitation and from Chinese oppression) that all the districts of Jiaozhou rose simultaneously. The memory of the rising has not faded over the ages: the Vietnamese people still honour Li Bi as a national hero. Though the Chinese Empire managed to

<sup>1</sup> Durand publishes the Chinese text of this legend in his article [15a, 449].

<sup>2</sup> In his article on the Early Li, which appeared in 1954, Durand quotes relevant extracts from fragments of 14th-century manuscripts possessed by L'Ecole de l'Extrême Orient in Paris. He states, indeed, that those extracts are the main rationale of his article. We cannot understand why he implies that they had only recently come to light, when they were, in fact, published in full by Maspéro in 1916.

regain its position, because the Viets were not at that time strong enough to establish and defend an independent state, Vietnamese tradition views Li Bi as the founder of the first independent Viet dynasty after 600 years of Chinese domination.

In 550 A.D., when Li Bi was defeated and the battles in the south were over, Chen Ba-xian was named *ci-shi* [11, juan 163, 5035]. But he was shortly recalled to China, to help deal with internal disturbances, which continued under the Chen dynasty—that is, well into the 6th century.

The Chinese sources, being largely occupied with internal affairs, refer only rarely to Jiaozhou—and this gave the Vietnamese historiographers *carte blanche* for their accounts of Trieu Quang Phuc's career. Yet certain details have come down to us: in 555 A.D., for instance, Liu Yuan-yan, the *ci-shi* of Jiaozhou, mustered tens of thousands of troops to support Wang Lin [11, juan 167, 5139]; and there were battles in Rinan district, in Mingzhou (556 A.D.) [11, juan 167, 5142] and in Dezhou (557 A.D.) [11, juan 167, 5162].

In 558 A.D. the Chen Emperor merged Guangzhou and Jiaozhou in a *du-du*—a military and administrative unit. Ouyang Wei, already responsible for 19 regions, was made military governor of the *du-du* [11, juan 167, 5172].

But the situation in China itself was such that no such reforms could substantially improve the Chinese position in Jiaozhou: the sources specify 589 and 590 A.D. as particularly disturbed years. One rising in this period was led by a Viet called Li Chun, who declared himself military governor of Jiaozhou, but was quickly dealt with by a Chinese force headed by Yang Su [11, juan 177, 5530].

In 602 A.D. Li Fa Ti and his generals seized several towns and administrative centres, including Longbian and Yueshang. In response the Sui Emperor sent Liu Fang with a punitive force consisting of 27 contingents—*ying*. The sources describe Liu Fang as model disciplinarian, who punished the slightest misdemeanour with death, but at all other times was like a father to his men [11, juan 179, 5598; 9, juan 53, 11478, 9b].

He decided to exploit the element of surprise by attacking from Yunnan province. When heat and exhaustion began to take their toll among the troops, and their num-

bers fell rapidly, he selected the most hardy among them and continued his advance. Li Fa Ti surrendered without a fight and was sent to Changan [11, juan 179, 5598; 9, juan 53, 11478, 9b]. Liu Fang, meanwhile, executed the majority of the rebels in order to prevent a second rising [9, juan 53, 11478, 9b].

Having done his job in Jiaozhou, Liu Fang was ordered to proceed into Linyi in 605 A.D. [9, juan 53, 11478, 10a; 11, juan 180, 5616]. His campaign there was totally successful from China's point of view and disastrous for Linyi: four fifths of the population perished in battle [11, juan 180, 5619] and the country was laid waste by the invading troops; the capital was destroyed and vast amounts of booty carried off. But Chinese domination there was short-lived, and after the army had moved north life in Linyi was soon more or less as it had been.

In the latter years of the Sui dynasty (584-616 A.D.) the links between Jiaozhou and the central authority were attenuated, and the disturbances continued. 'At the end of the *Da-ye* period (605-617 A.D.) the people of Hainan (the inhabitants of the southern provinces—*auth.*) suffered from the oppression of the officials [and] several times rebellions flared up' [8, juan 90, 16310, 7b-8a]. The weakness of the Sui dynasty encouraged Xiao Xian, a Chinese mandarin, to declare himself *wang* in 617 A.D. A year later, as Emperor of the Liang dynasty [13, juan 56, 14503, 2a], he was in control of a state which, occupying the area now known as Guangdong province, broke the communications between Jiaozhou and Central China completely for some time. Xiao Xian tried to woo Qiu He, governor of Jiaozhou and an extremely wealthy man. 'Many countries to the west of Linyi sent Qiu He pearls, rhinoceros horns, gold [and] precious things, so that Qiu He was very rich—richer even than the *wang* (Xiao Xian—*auth.*)' [8, juan 90, 16310, 8a]. It seems that this tribute was on its way to China but was held up in Jiaozhou because communication between the two states had been broken. It was clearly in Xiao Xian's interests to win the favour of such a powerful neighbour, but Qiu He rejected his advances and defeated him in battle [v. 8, juan 90, 16310, 8a].

The year 618 A.D. saw the dawn of the Tang dynasty, which was to rule China for three centuries (618-906 A.D.),

during which time the country became a force to be reckoned with in the medieval world and developed a sophisticated and well-regulated administration system. The influence of the Chinese emperors extended over vast distances: from the 7th to 9th centuries the Empire itself was larger than it had ever been before, while its vassal states increased and were more tightly controlled. It was during this period, we assume, that Chinese domination left its deepest imprint on Viet territory.<sup>1</sup>

Jiaozhou was swallowed up in an inexorable Tang advance towards the south [v. 11, juan 190, 5951, 5953]; Xiao Xian capitulated in 621 A.D., after a show of resistance [v. 11, juan 179, 5934, 5936], and the governors and commanders of several districts followed suit. Qiu He surrendered too, and in 622 was appointed governor of Jiaozhou.<sup>2</sup>

The Tang Emperors introduced several administrative reforms intended to reinforce the central authority, and to strengthen the links between the various parts of the Empire and between the Emperor and his subject domains. The frontier regions and outlying areas came in for particularly close attention: Emperor Tai-zong (627-649 A.D.), for example, kept a careful eye on the selection of mandarins for foreign service, removing bribetakers and executing those who did not carry out their assigned duties. [11, juan 193, 6058].

During the seventh century the titles, and no doubt the functions, of high-ranking administrative personnel varied considerably. The name of the Jiaozhou administration was also altered from Jiaozhou *zong-guan-fu* to Jiaozhou *da-du-du*. Both these designations indicate that Jiaozhou was a kind of military protectorate. In 679 Jiao-

<sup>1</sup> Certain scholars believe that Chinese control over Vietnam was never stronger than in the 7th to 9th centuries. Le Thanh Khoi writes that 'Tang domination was the heaviest that Jiaozhou ever bore' [18, 122]. Hinton agrees: 'North and Central Vietnam were brought under closer Chinese control than ever before' [16, 7].

<sup>2</sup> 'Qiu He, the *tai-hou* of Sui [district], was made the ruler of Jiaozhou. [Qiu] He sent Gao Shi-liang, the *si ma* (a military rank—*auth.*) to petition for an audience. Agreement [was received] in an Imperial decree' [11, juan 190, 5948]. In reply Qiu He sent his son, Qiu Shi-li, to Changan, the Tang capital, where he was seen by Emperor Gao-zu (618-627 A.D.) [8, juan 90, 16310, 8a].

zhou was again renamed, becoming the military protectorate (*du hu-fu*) of Annan.<sup>1</sup> This name persisted after the Tang period, and has gained wide currency among Western scholars.

Extensive internal changes also took place; new districts and sub-districts were created, and the smaller administrative units abolished or merged, sometimes in connection with administrative and territorial reforms in China itself and sometimes as a purely local undertaking.<sup>2</sup>

The Chinese administrators, sensing the precariousness of their position and aware that anything might spark off another uprising, were forced into all kinds of manoeuvres in order to secure their power. They split the territory into smaller areas and employed Viets in administrative posts. The power of the Chinese governors in Vietnam depended directly on the situation in China itself, and increased as the process of centralisation gained momentum.

Annan stretched across the whole of North Vietnam and part of Central Vietnam [v. 21, 539-584, 666-682]; in the south it bordered on Linyi, which was called Huangwang from the eighth century. As part of Lingnan province [v. 11, juan 192, 6033],<sup>3</sup> it was divided into seven zones (called 'departments' by many Western scholars). Jiaozhou, Fengzhou and Changzhou were in the Hong Ha valley, Huangzhou, Yanzhou and Fulu were further to the south and Luzhou embraced the mountainous coastal region and an island in the Bay of Along.

All these departments, administrated by Chinese mandarins with the help of Chinese troops, were subdivided into districts—*jun*—and then into sub-districts [v. 21, 550]:<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Western Protectorate—the Dominion of the West—was created first. The Tangs conquered the south relatively easily [24, 245.] Annan—the Dominion of the South—was the last protectorate to be formed. The Chinese were no doubt motivated by a desire for harmony in creating and so naming it.

<sup>2</sup> For detailed descriptions of the districts and regions, see [13, juan 41, 14375-14377]. For a geographical description, see [8, juan 43, (1)]. For a description of Lingnan, see [15706-15711].

<sup>3</sup> The sources report that Lingnan was one of the 10 provinces [*lao*] formed in one year.

<sup>4</sup> Maspéro writes that the number, names and boundaries of the departments changed so often that the vast majority of them were forgotten by the 10th century [21, 550].



during the Tang period, Annan contained several dozen sub-districts. The areas in the river plain were administered on the principles which applied throughout the Empire, while the mountainous areas, which never fully submitted to Chinese dominion, were controlled by the local nobility [24, 248]. The *Xin Tang shu* mentions no less than 41 mountain departments (*ji mi zhou*).

The new road begun in 639 A.D.—it passed from what is now the province of Guizhou through Yongzhou and ended in Jiaozhou—was no doubt intended as a means of bringing the mountain tribes under closer control. And it was successful: 'Over 28,000 households of *man* tribes gave themselves up' [11, juan 194, 6148].

Previous to the Tang era individual members of the Viet ruling classes had been brought into the administration system, but from the 7th to the 9th centuries this traditional Imperial policy was more widely applied. The Viets, like all other inhabitants of the 'Celestial Empire', had to pass competitive examinations in order to enter the Chinese civil service. During the *Hui-chang* period (841-846 A.D.), for example, eight people from Annan were allowed to take the examinations for the rank of *jin-shi* and ten for the rank of *min-shi* [4, 33].

Those Viets who passed were not limited to service in their home department. A Viet named Jiang Gong-fu, a native of Aizhou and Riñan, attained the rank of *jin-shi*, joined the Academy at Hanlin, attracted the attention of Emperor De-zong (780-805 A.D.) and became *zai-xiang*, the senior Imperial counsellor. We know of other Viets who occupied high posts in the Imperial court [2, 176] and the local administration and who helped the Chinese mandarins carry out the sinification of the Vietnamese people.

Tang financial policy was identical throughout the Empire and involved land tax, a goods levy and labour conscription. The land tax demanded 2 *dan* (1 *dan* was 103, 54688 litres) of millet or 3 *hu* (1 *hu* was 51, 77344 litres) of gluten rice from every adult male. All the men had to work on public projects on 20 days a year (22 in a leap year) or give 3 *chi* (1 *chi* was 0,32 metres) of fine silk for each day they did not work. The goods levy consisted of two pieces of fine silk, 2 *zhang* (= 3,2 metres) of print silk and 3 *liang* (1 *liang* was 37,301 grams) of cotton per house-

hold [4, 31]. Over and above these taxes, which were imposed on all the provinces, Annan was expected to send gifts of local produce to the Imperial court.

Both Annan and Guangdong played a significant role in Chinese foreign trade. As noted above, the southern areas were vital to Sun Quan's foreign policy in the 3rd century A.D.

Jiaozhou or Annan was China's link with India, the countries of Indochina and the South Seas.

'Tribute missions' to the Chinese court arrived in the ports of Jiaozhou and Guangzhou, and a lively trade went on there too. Wang Sengru's biography in the *Liang-shu* tells us that in Nanhai district 'maritime vessels brought foreign merchants several times a year to exchange goods. In earlier times [those goods] were bought up on the market at half-price, and then sold at a profit which several times exceeded [the original cost]. This policy existed for many years and became common practice' [3, juan 33, 7880, 2b-7881, 3a].

In the 7th and early 8th centuries, when Imperial centralisation was at its peak, the number of Viet risings fell significantly in comparison with the preceding period. Since there were no disturbances during that period, the Chinese annalists pass over many of Annan's history in silence, or limit themselves to a brief mention of official appointments.

However, when Liu Yan-you, who became governor of Annan in 679 A.D., doubled the taxes, the vehement reaction made a rising seem inevitable. In an attempt to avert it, Liu Yan-you executed Li Si-xian, the ringleader of the discontents, in 687.<sup>1</sup> This turned out to be a miscalculation, for it sparked off the rising instead of forestalling it.

<sup>1</sup> The section 'Ben zi' of the *Xin Tang shu* [8, juan 4, 15451, 3b] reports that in the eighth moon of the third year of the *Chui-gong* period Li Si-xian of Jiaozhou killed Liu Yan-you. We cannot give much credence to this, as Liu Yan-you's biographies in the *Xin Tang shu* [8, juan 201, 16836, 3b] and the *Jiu Tang shu* [13, juan 190, 15292, 8b] attest, on the contrary, that Liu Yan-you killed Li Si-xian. The *Zizhi tongjian* states that Liu Yan-you killed the insurgents' leader, but does not give his name. Hu San-xing's commentary mentions the alternative version of 'Ben zi', but notes that Sima Guang's text, which is based on the *Shi lu*, omits all reference to any rival account [11, juan 204, 6445].

The insurgents surrounded the town where the Chinese governor resided. As the garrison was under strength, Liu Yan-you and his troops blockaded themselves in and waited for reinforcements, which never came. Liu Yan-you was killed during the siege and the Chinese had to transfer troops from elsewhere to deal with the rising, which was ultimately crushed by Cao Xuan-jing, the commander of Guizhou [13, juan 190, 15292, 8b; 8, juan 201, 16837, 4a].

The Chinese sources mention another rising in May 891 A.D., which was also caused by an increase in taxes. The rebels surrounded the residence of the governor, and killed him. This prompted the Chinese to create a special army in Annan 'to pacify the distant [lands]'-*rou yuan jun* [11, juan 233, 7524]. An earlier source informs us that in 724 A.D. there were 15,400 soldiers in the four departments which included Jiaozhou [11, juan 215, 6850] and that Annan alone housed 4,200. The state and the people paid heavily to maintain these garrisons and 'from that time the people experienced great sufferings' [11, juan 215, 6851].

This proves yet again that the Chinese Empire, despite its selective use of the Viet nobility for administrative posts, could hold its position on Viet territory only through force.

From the mid-eighth century, after An Lu-shan's mutiny, Tang power began to wane. Local officials took advantage of this, as they often had in the past, and several of them led rebellions.

Duong Thanh (Yang Qing), a military commander from a rich and noble family, dissatisfied with his official position, was waiting for a convenient moment to move against the Chinese governor. That moment came in 819 A.D., when Li Xiang-gu, the governor, gave him 3,000 troops to use against the mountain tribes: he turned instead on his superior [13, juan 131, 14905, 6a; 8, juan 80, 16257, 12a; 11, juan 241, 7774] and killed him, his family, his servants and officials—over 1,000 people in all [11, juan 241, 7774]. The Chinese government, unable to mount an expedition against him, gave him an amnesty and appointed him governor of one of the Viet districts. But, confident in his military strength, he refused to obey the local Chinese

mandarin Gui Zhong-wu [8, juan 81, 16257, 12a]. The Emperor was powerless to strip him of his position, so Gui Zhong-wu, aware that alone he was no match for Duong Thanh, began to undermine his support among the local nobility. Several of them went over to the Chinese side with their troops—a total of 7,000 men—and Duong Thanh, thus isolated, was run to earth and killed [13, juan 131, 14905, 6a].

From this we see that in the 9th century the Viet nobles had their own forces and could support or resist the Chinese authorities as they saw fit. The Chinese, for their part, had to make the best of a bad situation.

The mountain tribes, meanwhile, encouraged by the disturbances in Annan and the weakening of central authority, began to rebel and to attack Chinese troops and parts of Annan itself with increasing frequency.

The information provided in the Chinese sources is not sufficient to allow us to ascertain the social composition of the Annan risings. We can, however, assume that nationalism was not the only motive force, since local feudal exploitation oppressed the people no less than foreign domination—which is why they always rose so promptly in revolt, why the slightest cause could light the fuse.

In 843 A.D., soldiers detailed to build urban fortifications mutinied, burned the watch-towers and sacked the treasury. The governor fled to Guangzhou [11, juan 247, 7993]. These details, sparse as they are, prompt us to interpret this mutiny as a symptom of the growing conflict within China itself, of the contradictions which less than 40 years later would provoke Huang Chao's massive peasant rising. Since the garrison guarding the governor's residence was normally made up entirely of Chinese, it is highly unlikely that the soldiers who mutinied in 843 A.D. were Viets.

Many of Annan's governors were cruel men whose greed and fondness of bribes weighed heavily on the people. Li Zhuo<sup>1</sup> fitted this description perfectly. 'Avaricious and

<sup>1</sup> Li Zheng-fu holds that Li Zhuo was governor of Annan from 851 to 855 A.D. [2,101]. Sima Guang asserts that the rising provoked by Li Zhuo's unjust requisitions took place in 858, but follows this with a description of events which preceded the first Nanzhao invasion. He also states that Wang Shi was appointed governor in the first moon of 858 [11, juan 249, 8066].

cruel, [he] forced the *Man* [tribes] to sell their horses and cows, giving one *dou* of salt for each [and] moreover he killed Du Cun-cheng, the Man leader [11, juan 249, 8070]. Distressed by this and similar actions, the people turned for help to Nanzhao, a neighbouring state which had invaded Annan previously, in 846.

Early in 858 Wang Shi was appointed governor of Annan. One of his first priorities was to protect his residence from the steadily escalating attacks of the mountain tribes. He surrounded the town with a 12-*li* ring of long-lived hard wood trees<sup>1</sup> and had a moat dug around the outside of it [8, juan 167, 16680, 9b]. A bamboo grove formed the outermost line of defence. Wang Shi also selected the men for his garrison with great care and took a personal interest in their training [11, juan 249, 8066]. Around the mid-ninth century several military commanders had large armies at their disposal—Luo Xing-gong, for example, kept a 2,000-strong army in Annan [11, juan 249, 8067]. Wang Shi knew that he would need a large force in good fighting trim to counteract this potential threat and defend himself against the mountain tribes. His efforts soon brought results: in 858 a Man attack on the residence got bogged down in the lines of defence, came up against the governor's army and withdrew without striking a blow [11, juan 249, 8066].

Later, however, Wang Shi needed all his guile and tenacity to escape unscathed when the local people insisted that he move north [8, juan 167, 16680, 9b; 11, juan 249, 8070] to protect them from a first-class Chinese force<sup>2</sup> which had a reputation for dealing with rebels in a particularly blood-thirsty manner.

Wang Shi did much to enhance the Chinese regency in Annan. 'Famine and disturbances followed one on the other in Annan [and] for six years they could not send presentations to the court.... [Wang] Shi began [to deliver] tribute and [to pay] taxes and also to reward the soldiers' [11, juan 249, 8072]. He also exploited the mutual enmity between

<sup>1</sup> Hu San-xing describes the trees in his commentary [11, juan 249, 8066].

<sup>2</sup> They were known as the Yellow-heads. See further the *Xin Tang shu* [8, juan 167, 16680, 9b].

the tribal leaders and set them against each other to enhance his own position. Yet he was recalled to China in 860 A.D., after only two years in Annan [11, juan 250, 8081].

After his departure Nanzhao began to attack Annan with increasing frequency. 'In the twelfth moon, on [the day of] *wu-shen* (17 January 861 A.D.), the Man [tribes], who inhabited Annan, invited the armies of Nanzhao, which numbered over 30,000 men. [They] took advantage of this opportunity and attacked Jiaozhou, laying siege to it. Li Hu, the governor, along with the *jiangjun*, fled to Wuzhou' [11, juan 250, 8092]. The Nanzhao forces were driven off by a combined army from the neighbouring districts [11, juan 250, 8094].

Late in 862 Nanzhao sent 50,000 men into Annan; the governor Cai Xi dispatched a message of distress to the Emperor [11, juan 250, 8101]. Finding himself in an enemy encirclement and fearing that no help was forthcoming, Cai Xi rallied the entire urban population to man the defences [11, juan 250, 8101]. A terrible battle against overwhelming odds followed, at the end of which the Chinese forces abandoned the town and descended to the river—but found that their ships had disappeared. A number of them, seeing no alternative, went back, caught the Nanzhao troops unawares, killed over 2,000 of them [11, juan 250, 8102] and were in control of the town again within a few hours. Nanzhao reinforcements then arrived; the town quickly changed hands again and was carefully secured. Cai Xi retreated with heavy losses. The sources record that a total of 150,000 died during this engagement [11, juan 250, 8103]<sup>1</sup>.

The Chinese spent several years preparing their retaliatory campaign against Nanzhao [13, juan 19(1), 14102, 3a; 11, juan 250, 8105]. In the sixth moon of 866 A.D. Gao Pian set out [11, juan 250, 8115]. He took the residence after a ten-day siege [11, juan 250, 8115] and eventually managed to drive the enemy from Annan [11, juan 250, 8116]. Yet, although the local Man tribes—17,000 people in all—went over to his side [11, juan 250, 8116], the Tang Empire had

<sup>1</sup> An approximate figure, of course—but it indicates that the Chinese losses were immense.

exhausted its available resources in liberating Annan. The Emperor therefore expressly forbade further aggression against Nanzhao: the troops were to halt at the frontier and secure it, and the governor was to do all he could to establish friendly relations with his neighbour [11, juan 250, 8116].

Gao Pian was appointed commander of the reconstituted military protectorate of Annan, which was renamed Jinghaijun [11, juan 250, 8117], but, as one source reports 'from the time of Li Zhuo, when Nanzhao made its attack on Annan, there was disorder in Annan for ten years [;] only now has pacification begun' [11, juan 250, 8117]. Moreover, though Nanzhao troops had been ejected from Annamese soil and friendly relations had been initiated, the attacks continued.<sup>1</sup>

Gao Pian was the last Chinese governor of Annan to enjoy any real power: the enfeebled Tang dynasty was finding it increasingly difficult to maintain its position there. And in 873 A.D., when a peasant rising, led by Huang Chao, flared up in China, Viet territory was also seized with unrest: the Annan garrison mutinied in 880, and the governor went into hiding [11, juan 253, 8224]. Due to internal disturbances and the continuing incursions of Nanzhao and the mountain tribes, 'for 15 years more than half the taxes were not delivered to the capital'; the coffers of Annan were empty [11, juan 253, 8227].

The peasant rising in China was gaining ground; Huang Chao moved southwards, then turned to the north and laid siege to Changan and Luoyang. The Tang court was by then in total disarray, and exercised no effective power for the last 30 years, though the dynasty held its formal position until 907 A.D. After Huang Chao's rising was put down in 883, China descended into a protracted period of civil war, in the course of which the country disintegrated into numerous minor kingdoms. This, the period of the Five Dynasties, was a time when the Viet lands, nominally held by one or other of the ruling houses of China, finally came under the complete control of the Viet elite. But they could not reach total agreement among themselves [11, juan 277, 9057, 9064; juan 281, 9172, 9192]. The Southern

<sup>1</sup> See Hu San-xing's commentary [11, juan 253, 8227].

Han<sup>1</sup> tried to exploit this discord in order to recapture the Viet lands but the Viets were saved by their leader Ngô Quyền (Wu Quan), who 'took Jiaozhou [and] led his troops to meet [the enemy]. First he drove many large stakes with sharp ends [into the sea-bed] in the bay, [then] he put iron points on them, [and,] taking advantage of the tide, sent out some light junks to lure [the enemy] into battle.... At the moment the tide began to recede, the Han ships were caught [on the iron stakes and] could not move. The Han troops were heavily defeated, [the junks] capsized and a large part of the soldiers drowned. The Han ruler wept, collected together the remnants [of his] army and returned' [11, juan 281, 9193]. Such was the inglorious end of the Southern Han attempt to take over the Viet lands.

In 939 A.D. Ngô Quyền declared himself ruler of an independent state. This heroic page of Vietnam's history marks the end of Chinese domination and the reassertion of Viet sovereignty after ten centuries of struggle.

In summary, then, we have seen that the conquest of Viet passed through several stages, for the Viets, a heroic, freedom-loving people, did not readily submit to the Chinese emperors.

The first Chinese incursions into Vietnam, initiated by Qin Shi-huang, were only partially successful. The state of Namviet that was created at that time was controlled by a ruler of Chinese extraction who, although acknowledging Chinese supremacy, conducted an independent policy. This state of affairs continued for 100 years.

The second stage of the conquest of Viet lands is bound up with the expansionist policies of Wu-di, the Han Emperor. In the 3rd century B.C. the sovereign state of Namviet was destroyed and its territory divided into nine districts and incorporated into the Chinese Empire. Yet the early Han emperors proceeded carefully with the sinification of the conquered territories, and the appointed rulers found themselves powerless to make substantial changes in the areas within their jurisdiction.

<sup>1</sup> The Southern Han dynasty, one of the Ten States (905-971 A.D.), was centred on Guangzhou. It should not be confused with the Han dynasty (947-951 A.D.), whose capital was at Kaifeng.



Only in the third stage, which began after the massive anti-Chinese rising of 40-44 A.D. and Ma Yuan's punitive expeditions, was the Chinese administrative system really established in Vietnam—and only because the Viet lands had been bled white by their stubborn resistance to the invaders, the rebel leaders were all dead, the Viet state system destroyed and the hereditary tribal aristocracy obliterated.

And still the Viet people put up a determined fight against sinification. Although the Chinese emperors viewed Jiaozhou as part of Chinese territory, the region was never beaten into complete submission: Chinese mandarins occupied the higher administrative posts but local administration was, as a rule, largely in the hands of the Viet nobility, who took the competitive examination for those posts under the same conditions as the native Chinese. In general, they carried out Chinese policy, but there were cases when they launched rebellions to protect their own interests. The mountain tribes, who came under a special administrative system, never gave up their independence; time and again the Chinese tried to subjugate them and failed.

Usually a newly-appointed Chinese governor had to fight his way to power; the Chinese administrators were forced to compromise in order not to endanger their position. Aware of the insecurity of their situation, that anything could spark off a rising, they tried to root themselves as deeply as they could into the conquered territories. With this aim in mind Chinese settlers were encouraged to move in, were given the best land, and apparently filled many local administrative posts. Other Chinese governors were to subdivide the area, to employ Viet administrative personnel and often to use bribes and gifts as a means of getting things done. The power of the Chinese governors, however, depended on the state of affairs in China itself; it was stronger when China was strongly centralised and weaker when centralising tendencies abated.

Thus the extent of Viet dependence on China varied, and at certain times the Chinese court, unable to hold out against the Viet ruling classes, simply had to accept their usurpation of authority. The Chinese rulers needed extensive resources and substantial armed forces to keep the Viet

people in submission, for the opposition movement was never really crushed: the many centuries of Chinese domination are punctuated by numerous risings, large and small, which freed Viet territory from Chinese interference for several years at a time. The greatest rising was led by Li Bi, who declared himself ruler of Van Suan—a name which has become a symbol of national liberation.

Viet risings were usually led by members of the ruling class—that is, by landowners or civil or military officials. They exploited the discontent of the Viet people, who suffered as much from the oppression of their own feudal lords as from Chinese domination. The rebels seized the administrative centres with relative ease and drove out the Chinese governors, but their armies were too poorly organised to cope with the Chinese forces sent against them and they had even more difficulty in setting up an administrative system in the conquered territories. There were two reasons for this. The insurgent leaders—members of the land-owning class—were interested largely in securing their own interests and therefore continued to follow the Chinese administrative model, doing nothing to ease the lot of the Viet farmers. Moreover, China was still a powerful state, with a strong and well-organised army and generals who could always bring the Viet lands back under control, if only temporarily. Sometimes the military conflicts lasted for several years—and with the passing of time they became ever more bitter and bloody.

The fall of the Tang dynasty and the political fragmentation and internal power struggles which followed within China helped clear the path for the Viet liberation movement. It was Ngô Quyền who dealt the Southern Han the final blow and drove the Chinese invaders from his country.

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SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS  
FROM ANCIENT TIMES  
TO THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

In looking to the origins of Sino-Indian relations, we should first review the means by which such contact might arise. Given that the earliest Chinese civilisation centred on the middle and lower stretches of the Huang Ho basin and its Indian counterpart arose in the Indus valley, a considerable period elapsed before direct contact could be established; the Indian culture gradually established its territorial foundations and began to move eastwards, while the Chinese state put out feelers towards the south and west. Since this process occupied many centuries, it is impossible to date the beginning of Sino-Indian relations precisely. Though individual and sporadic contacts might well have occurred during the centuries when the two nations were amassing information about each other from neighbouring tribes and peoples, we would not be justified in taking the end of the 2nd millennium B.C. for our starting point, as Zhang Xing-lang, for example, has done in his seminal work on Chinese foreign relations. This view arises from the Chinese tendency to modernise antiquity, to transport relatively late phenomena and institutions back into the 'golden age' of ancient China: we must be circumspect with our sources and accept only those pieces of information which command absolute confidence.

The earliest reference to Sino-Indian contacts, in the *Arthashastra*,<sup>1</sup> the ancient Indian treatise, speaks of fabrics from 'the land of China' [v. 1, 86]. Horses from China and

<sup>1</sup> The *Arthashastra* is usually attributed to the 4th or 3rd century B.C.

Chinese soldiers are mentioned in the *Mahabharata*, and the *Ramayana* and *Laws of Manu* include China in a list of foreign countries [23, 4]. The latter three works, however, were compiled over several centuries at the turn of the modern era: their final editions date from between the 2nd and 4th centuries A.D., and since their ancient components cannot be accurately distinguished from more recent additions the information they contain cannot serve as indisputable evidence on early Sino-Indian relations.

One of Zhang Xing-lang's sources is Kshemendra's *Body-satvavadana Kalpalata*, written in the 10th century A.D., which mentions an Indian merchant who returned from the lands of an eastern people called the *naga* with goods for the court of Ashoka (273-232 B.C.) [v. 21, 25-26]. Taking the word *naga* to mean 'the people of the dragon tribe', Zhang Xing-lang concludes that those people were the Chinese. His basis for such a statement, however, seems to us rather slight, especially in view of the fact that it is derived from a very late source. While not denying that individual Indian merchants might have reached the shores of China in the 3rd century B.C., we cannot accept this as a reliable reference to early Sino-Indian contacts.

Another of Zhang Xing-lang's assertions is also noteworthy. A Chinese-language Buddhist document records the arrival in China of 118 people from the Western lands (Central Asia) in 218 B.C. [v. 21, 23]. One of the names mentioned—Sribandu—is obviously Indian. On such sparse evidence Zhang Xing-lang postulates that this was one of the groups of Buddhists sent abroad by Asoka [v. 21, 23], a suggestion which seems to us rather ill-considered, in view of the fact that Asoka died in 232 B.C. (or, according to certain sources, in 236)—that is, at least 14 years before the event described above took place. Though this is no grounds to reject the possibility that Indians might have reached China through Central Asia at the end of the 3rd century B.C., we must note again that Zhang Xing-lang's source was compiled after Buddhism became established in China (many centuries after the event—*trans.*).

Sima Qian's *Historical Notes*, on the other hand, are an invaluable source for early Sino-Indian contacts, since he made extensive use of information collected by Zhang Qian, a Chinese diplomat and traveller, which can be judged as

perfectly authentic. As the head of a Chinese embassy to Central Asia in 138 B.C., Zhang Qian took notes on all the countries he visited or heard anything about. India, he says, is a large country with a hot climate, where the capital is situated on a large river and elephants are used in battle [v. 14, juan 123, 1140 (1)]. Further, he states that while in Daxia (Bactria), he saw bamboo staves from Qiong (a mountain in the south-west of Sichuan province) and cloth from Shu (Sichuan) [v. 21, 27]. When the Chinese envoys asked how those things had got to Bactria, they were told that local merchants had brought them from Shendu (India), a country to the south-east of Bactria.

Zhang Qian worked out that since Bactria was far to the west of China and India was to the south-east of Bactria and since there were goods from Sichuan in India, the shortest route from China to India must pass through Sichuan [v. 14, juan 123, 1140 (1)]. He speculated too that it would be safer for Chinese embassies to enter India along that route than to go via Central Asia.

Putting together Zhang Qian's account and the *Arthashastra's* reference to Chinese cloth in India, we can be sure that Chinese goods were reaching India through Sichuan, Upper Burma and Assam by the 3rd or 2nd century B.C., if not earlier,<sup>1</sup> since the things which Zhang Qian saw were not solitary Chinese products that had strayed accidentally into Bactria. The very fact that Indian merchants were trading in Chinese goods with Bactria—and no doubt with other countries of Central Asia and the Middle East—indicates that those items abounded in India itself and, further, that Sino-Indian trade links through Upper Burma and Assam had existed long before Zhang Qian's journey.

Zhang Qian tells us that 'cunning merchants from Shu send goods here (to India—*auth.*) and some even come themselves' [14, juan 123, 1140 (1)]. The *Qian Han shu*

<sup>1</sup> Richard Hennig suggests that the goods referred to in the *Arthashastra* were brought from South China to the mouths of the Ganges by Malayan ships. This view, also advanced by Jacobi and Laufer but disputed by Pellier, is based on the hypothesis that the word *china*—'Chinese'—is of Malayan origin. However, Hennig makes no mention of Zhang Qian's account of the provenance of the goods or of his conclusion that there existed a route between China and India through Sichuan [5, vol. 1, 230-233].

also speaks of Sichuanese merchants in India and records the understanding of 'some people' that a 2,000-*li* journey across the mountains to the south-east would bring them to India [v. 9, juan 95, 2353 (4)].

Thus, the earliest direct link between China and India was established in the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C. along a route which passed through Sichuan, Upper Burma and Assam. A significant factor in this was the Chinese conquest and settlement of the area now called Sichuan—a process which, as many scholars maintain, accelerated considerably early in the 4th century B.C. [v. 8, 5].<sup>1</sup>

We wish here to clarify Jin Ke-mu's statement that in those early days the Chinese knew only of the northern part of India and that the Indian view of China extended no farther than the areas to the north of the Himalayas—that is, only south-west China [23, 4]. At that time present-day Tibet, Chamduo and Yunnan province were not part of China. It would therefore be more correct to assume that the Indians identified the lands to the east of the Himalayas—that is, Sichuan province—with China.

These first Sino-Indian ties were in no way 'official'; they were maintained by individual merchants who traded on their own initiative, not on orders from above.

The situation changed at the end of the 2nd century B.C. Shtein holds that the new phase in Sino-Indian relations was marked by a quickening of the intercourse between the two countries [v. 8, 43-44]. One reason for this was the new line in foreign relations taken by the centralised Han Empire, which had become firmly established by that time.

The Chinese court, being in possession of fairly precise details on the location, wealth and condition of the states of the Western Lands, began to harbour designs on them. As Sima Qian put it, China planned 'to extend her bounds by 10,000 *li*,' and 'to spread in every direction within the limits of the Four Seas (throughout the world—*auth.*) the greatness and virtue [of the Emperor]' [14, juan 123, 1140 (1)-(2)].

<sup>1</sup> V. M. Shtein sees reason to set this date back by 100 years, to the 5th and 4th centuries B.C., though his account of Sino-Indian relations mentions no event which predates the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C. [v. 8, 42-44].



A successful campaign against the Huns in 122-119 B.C., which assured the Chinese troops of a reliable base from which to launch their expedition into Central Asia, and a second mission led by Zhang Qian in 116-113 B.C. served as a prelude for the westward expansion. This time Zhang Qian's motives were purely political—namely, to spread as far abroad as possible the idea that the Han Empire was a power to be reckoned with, and to win military allies. He entered the territory of the Wusun tribe—the area around Issyk-Kul—with this latter aim in mind, simultaneously sending out envoys to various other countries, including India. But, as Sima Quang tells us, the envoys, having passed safely through Sichuan, were captured and killed by Kunmin tribesmen [9, juan 95, 2353 (4)]. The first Chinese attempt to enter into official relations with India thus ended in failure.

Yet the Han court, following Zhang Qian's advice, continued to seek direct links with India through Sichuan and Yunnan. In 111 B.C. a Chinese force defeated the Yi tribes who inhabited what is now Guizhou and Guangxi, and occupied their lands; two years later, in 109 B.C., the Chinese took some parts of Yunnan. Around this time another embassy was sent from south-west China to India. We know that it comprised more than ten people and was headed by Bo Shi-chang, Lü Yue-ren and Wang Ran-yu. Sima Qian records that they intended to pass through Bactria; the *Qian Han shu*, however, claims that they were seeking a way to India through the lands of the south-west [9, juan 95, 2353 (4)]. But this mission also came to grief in Kunmin.

Thus, the official Chinese moves towards India via the south-western land route—through Sichuan, Upper Burma and Assam—at the end of the 2nd century B.C. were unsuccessful.

Feelers put out in a different direction brought better results: late in the 2nd century B.C. the first official contact with India was established along the land route through Central Asia. Chinese victories in Ferghana in 103 and 102 B.C. strengthened China's position and influence in the Western Lands and led to the establishment of official contacts between China and Jibin, an area of what is now Kashmir. The *Qian Han shu* states that several embassies

were sent to Jibin at the turn of the 2nd century B.C.

But the ruling circles in Jibin, confident that distance made them invulnerable to Chinese military power, treated the ambassadors badly [v. 9, juan 96(1), 2369(1)]. The Chinese themselves were partly to blame for this, as they had been trying to put pressure on Jibin by referring to the proximity of Chinese forces.

After a transfer of power in Jibin, however, an embassy set out for China—though it never arrived. According to the *Qian Han shu*, Wen Zhong, a mandarin attached to the Chinese garrison in the Western Lands, returned with the embassy to Jibin [9, juan 96(1), 2369(1)], and there, we assume, again began to press the case for submission to China—since we know that the ruler of Jibin threatened to kill him. Wen Zhong's next move was to induce the son of a neighbouring ruler to stage a coup. As soon as he was in power in Jibin, Wen Zhong's protégé was sent a Chinese state seal 'according' him plenipotentiary rights in his domain [v. 9, juan 96(1), 2369(1)]. As described by the *Qian Han shu*, all this took place around the mid-first century B.C.

In an attempt to capitalise on this success, the Chinese court dispatched Zhao De, a very highly placed military man, to Jibin, apparently intending that he should arrogate to himself the role of governor. This naturally incensed the local ruler, who had Zhao De put in chains and over 70 members of his entourage killed. But the ruler of Jibin, indebted as he was to Wen Zhong for his very position, did not want to clash directly with China, and therefore detailed an embassy to explain his unfriendly behaviour to the Emperor [v. 9, juan 96(1), 2360(1)-(2)].

Between 48 B.C. and 33 B.C. Chinese interest in Jibin abated: missions from there were sent back on the grounds that 'that distant territory is not subject' [9, juan 96(1), 2369(2)-(3)]—which was, in effect, an admission of failure on the part of the Chinese court.

Communications were thus broken off, though when another Jibin embassy arrived sometime between 33 B.C. and 7 B.C. the Emperor's immediate intention was to reciprocate in kind. Certain dignitaries, however, persuaded him not to.

Another official contact established during the first

century B.C., albeit a sporadic and unenthusiastic one, was with Wuyishanli—usually transcribed Alexandria—which lay in the western part of the Punjab [v. 9, juan 96(1), 2370 (2)].

The *Qian Han shu* mentions one more country in north-west India—Wutuo, in the foothills of the Himalayas—but does not specify that it maintained official contacts with China.<sup>1</sup>

The advance of Chinese troops into the Western Lands and the growth of Chinese influence there at the turn of the 2nd century B.C. stimulated the rapid growth of trade between China and Central Asia along the great silk route, the caravan trail, which passes through Dunhuang. It is likely that merchants from the areas of north-west India mentioned above also took part in this caravan trade, though our sources give only oblique confirmation of this. The *Qian Han shu*, for example, states that the only people who came from Jibin between 33 and 7 B.C. with courtesy gifts were wandering merchants trying to set up commercial contacts with Chinese traders [v. 9, juan 96(1), 2369(3)], and since the descriptions of Jibin, Wuyishanli and Wutuo include lists of goods available in those countries, we can safely assume that trade links existed between them and China from at least the first century B.C.

A later source—the *Xi jing za ji*, compiled over the turn of the 6th century A.D.—records that in the reign of the Han Emperor Wu-di (140-87 B.C.) Shendu (India) sent gifts of saddles and bridles encrusted with precious stones and that subsequently China began to trade in these and similar goods [v. 21, 29]. We also know of an Imperial decree which directed envoys to bring specified amounts of ornamental items as 'gifts' for the court [21, 29]. It appears, therefore, that these envoys were carrying large amounts of goods, since they were able to do some trading even after making their 'presentations' to the Emperor.

The account in the *Xi jing za ji* is interesting from another point of view. Zhang Xing-lang's commentary tells us that

<sup>1</sup> Relations were also established with Qiantu, which Zhang Xing-lang identifies with Gandhara [21, 30], at the turn of the second century B.C.; a Qiantu embassy arrived in China in 68 B.C. However, though Qiantu was part of the ancient Indian state, it occupied an area within present-day Afghanistan, and therefore does not relate directly to our chosen theme.

the above-mentioned embassy reached China via north-west India—that is, along the great silk route—since official contacts between India and China via Burma and Sichuan still did not exist [v. 21, 29]. But since, as we have seen, the Chinese were already making clear distinctions between the various regions of north-west India, we suggest that this embassy did not come from one of these regions. The account clearly speaks of Shendu—of India itself. We also note—as the commentator, apparently, did not—that some of the ornamental items were made of mother-of-pearl, which came from the South Seas [v. 21, 29]. This leads us to believe that the envoys reached China by sea. Incidentally, Ya. M. Svet has postulated, on the basis of archaeological and epigraphic research, that Indian ships made landfall on the southern coast of China in the mid-second century B.C. [v. 4, 98].

So, in addition to the unsuccessful attempts to establish relations with India via Sichuan and Burma and to set up diplomatic and commercial contacts with the countries of north-west India through Central Asia, China began to reach out to India across the sea at the turn of the 2nd century A.D. The first reliable evidence of this is found in the *Qian Han shu*, which affirms that from the reign of Wu-di Chinese maritime expeditions, led by senior interpreters attached to the Imperial court, set sail from the Gulf of Bakbo (now the Gulf of Tonking) towards the South Seas [v. 9, juan 28 (2), 1632(3)-1633(1)]. The most distant countries mentioned are Huangzhi and Yichengbu, which most scholars identify with Kanchipura in southern India and Ceylon.<sup>1</sup> Our

<sup>1</sup> Scholars who have tackled this problem of identification are Ferrand and Pellier, Fujita from Japan and several Chinese historians and geographers, including Feng Cheng-jun and Zhang Xuan: for more details, see pp. 139-78. Shtein's suggestion that Huangzhi is the state of Ganga [v. 8, 66] seems to arise from an incorrect interpretation of the Chinese text: he takes the name of an institution—*Huangmen*—as a place name. Work on identification still continues: see V. A. Velgus, 'Issledovaniye nekotorykh spornykh voprosov istorii morekhodstva v Indiiskom okeane' [Some Controversial Issues Relating to Sea Travel in the Indian Ocean], in *Africana. Etnografiya, istoriya, lingvistika* [Ethnography, History, Linguistics], Leningrad, 1969, pp. 138-139; and V. A. Velgus, *Izvestiya o stranakh i narodakh Afriki i morskoye svyazi v basseynakh Tikhogo i Indiiskogo okeanov* [Facts about the Countries and Peoples of Africa and Maritime Links in the Pacific and Indian Oceans], Moscow, 1978, pp. 34-50.

sources make it clear that the expeditions went no further than this [v. 9, juan 28(2), 1632(4)].

It is important to note in this connection that the lands along the coast of the South China Sea were not incorporated into the Han Empire until 112 to 110 B.C., when the Chinese armies defeated the eastern and southern Yue tribes who inhabited those areas. Thus the sea voyages mentioned above could not have taken place before the very end of the 2nd century B.C.

Kanchipura, we are told by our source, was large and densely populated; its inhabitants were identical in appearance and customs to the people who lived on the east coast of Vietnam and it abounded in all kinds of curios. Yet, though the Chinese expeditions traded there and in other areas they visited—and indeed considered this their major aim—they were also detailed to establish primary diplomatic ties. At the beginning of the modern era this latter aim became more explicit: 'In the years of *Yuan-shi* during the reign of the Emperor Ping-di (1-5 A.D.), Wang Mang, having come to power and wishing to "make a brilliant display of his authority and virtue", generously bade the ruler of Huangzhi to send envoys and deliver live rhinoceroses as tribute' [9, juan 28(2), 1632(4)]. In other words, Wang Mang was trying to persuade Kanchipura to maintain diplomatic relations with China.

The Imperial court did all it could to have the visits of foreign envoys construed as acts of homage to the sole earthly sovereign, the Chinese Emperor: the envoys' gifts were called tribute, the messages they brought were falsified in translation, various humiliating rituals of reception were devised for them, and so on. This treatment was not reserved for the Indian states, however: it was based on principles of foreign policy which the Chinese ruling elite had formulated centuries before.

In attempting to date the establishment of the relations outlined above, we come up against the confusing fact that diplomatic and commercial relations were closely interwoven in ancient and medieval China. None the less, since the *Qian Han shu* speaks of tribute coming from overseas during the reign of Wu-di, we can assume that China was in diplomatic contact with Kanchipura and Ceylon at the turn of the 2nd century B.C. [v. 9, juan 28(2), 1632(4)]. The

nature of these relations becomes considerably clearer at the dawn of the modern era.

It is noteworthy that Wang Mang's desire to 'make a brilliant display of his authority and virtue' echoes the aim of 'spreading as far abroad as possible ... the majesty and virtue of the Han Empire' which was advanced in Zhang Qian's time (the end of the 2nd century B.C.) and was used to mask China's expansionist ends in the Western Lands and northern India. This similarity is not, of course, coincidental; these and similar formulations, which often appear in the official histories and documents of subsequent years, reflect the Imperial court's desire to demonstrate its strength abroad and assert its sovereignty over foreign lands in one form or another.

The development of these expansionist aims at the expense of the countries of the South Seas and of Western Lands, is rooted in the economic growth and political viability enjoyed by the unified Chinese state from the turn of the 2nd century B.C. However, these two areas of foreign involvement—westwards at the end of the 2nd century B.C. and southwards at the beginning of the first century A.D.—are in no way comparable, in terms of either methods or results. Zhang Qian's second mission and the Chinese envoys sent to Kashmir during the first century B.C. could rely on the support of large armed forces stationed not very far away and could therefore act more decisively. Wang Mang's envoys to the South Seas and southern India, depending solely on their own diplomatic address, had to express the same expansionist aims rather differently—that is, by seeking diplomatic ties which could be interpreted as a mark of submission to China.

Although Wang Mang mentions the delivery of a live rhinoceros from Kanchipura [v. 8, 175], the Chinese sources record no direct political outcome of the mission to southern India. The arrival of an Indian embassy would undoubtedly have signalled a Chinese diplomatic success, but the rhinoceros, evidently, was sent with the Chinese envoys on their return home. Yet the Imperial urge to expand at India's expense did not abate: in fact, Chinese expansionist plans became more concrete, as we see from the writings of Du Du, a Han courtier who, at some time in the first half of the first century A.D., recorded Han suc-

cesses in foreign policy. Speaking of advances made in the south—the annexation of Rinan (in northern Vietnam) and an expedition to Zhuyai (the coast of Central Vietnam)—he goes on to state that ‘in the South East [it is] also [possible] to seize Huangzhi, annex Huaner, defeat Diaoti and destroy India’ [18, juan 70(1), 3675(4)–3676(1)]. Neither Du Du nor the *Hou Han shu*, where this excerpt was found, indicate precisely when such lines of Chinese official thought emerged. But since India is mentioned as a whole and the names of neighbouring countries given here were not found in documents relating to the advance of the Han Empire to the shores of the South China Sea, we may assume that these plans took shape only shortly before Du Du recorded them—that is, around the beginning of the first century A.D.

However, all such intentions had to be temporarily abandoned, due to a massive uprising which gripped China from 18 to 25 A.D., the political struggle which followed and the escalation of military operations against the Huns in north-western China.

It was not until sometime between 58 and 75 A.D.—some sources specify 64/65 A.D.—that a follow-up to Wang Mang’s diplomatic initiatives was arranged, this time with the aim of learning more about Buddhism, a creed whose doctrines had much in common with the goals of the Imperial court [18, juan 88, 3825(4)]. Yet in this, one of the first noteworthy references to Buddhism in early Chinese official documents, we learn nothing about the route taken by the embassy or the results it achieved.

In the mid-first century A.D. China again tried to establish contact with India through Upper Burma and Assam. The fact that Yongchang province was created in 69 A.D. approximately 100 kilometres from the present-day frontier between Burma and China [6, 35], specifically to guard the Sino-Indian land route, indicates that it was still in use and that, despite the failure of the early official initiatives, non-official trade between the two countries continued.

The *Hou Han shu* records the arrival of Indian embassies with ‘tribute and gifts’ via the Central Asian land route between 89 and 106 A.D. [v. 18, juan 88, 3825 (4)] and mentions others which passed through Rinan—i.e. which reached China by sea—in 159 and 161 A.D.

At the end of the 2nd century B.C. the Chinese had obviously not grasped that there was an integral link between north-western India, the lands bordering on Assam and the areas in southern India; by the mid-second century A.D., however, their concept of India as a whole was perfectly clear. The *Hou Han shu* asserted that India embraced dozens of 'individual states', each with its own ruler, and hundreds of towns with their own administrators, and also attempted to define the boundaries of 'the Indian lands' [18, juan 88, 3825(3)-(4)]. Links with China along at least three different routes had no doubt given the Indians an equally precise view of their northern neighbour.

Many scholars have tended to view the increase in Sino-Indian diplomatic contacts during the latter half of the first century and throughout the 2nd century A.D. as the result of the development of foreign trade, which was referred to as 'tribute' and 'reciprocal gifts'. The procedure was as follows: the Chinese demanded gifts—which they magnified as 'tribute'—from all visiting envoys, and gave them 'reciprocal gifts' as a 'reward for effort' or a mark of goodwill on the part of the Emperor towards the ruler who sent them. The exchange of gifts was a common instrument of diplomacy in ancient and medieval times, but, as the quantities exchanged between China and her neighbours were often extremely large, we assume that the 'tribute' system was a form of inter-governmental trade.

While bearing this in mind, we note that the exchange of goods was not literally reciprocal. The gifts could be more generous on one side than the other, and the items offered depended not on demand but on the will of the giver. In other words, the 'reciprocal gifts' were not, strictly speaking, payment. Moreover, the Chinese ruling elite used the arrival of foreign embassies to boost its prestige at home and abroad, as did the age-old claim that the Emperor was sovereign over all lands and peoples—which claim was, in its turn, further buttressed by the visits of foreign ambassadors. Hence the 'reciprocal gifts' presented by the Imperial court bore, among all else, a specifically political significance: lavish gifts were a certain way of attracting foreign envoys to China, of establishing new diplomatic relations and shoring up the old. There is no doubt that the main interest of the Chinese ruling circles lay in receiving foreign



goods as 'tribute'.

Chinese foreign trade was by no means limited to diplomatic channels. As noted above, private trade between China and India was well-established by the end of the first century A.D. The *Hou Han shu* gives a detailed list of Indian produce: elephants, rhinoceroses, tortoises, tortoise-shell, gold, silver, copper, iron, lead, tin, fabrics, woolen carpets, perfumes, loaf sugar, black pepper, ginger and black salt [v. 18, juan 88, 3825(4)]. It also mentions that valuable items from Daxing—the eastern part of the Roman Empire—were found in India. This is a clear indication of the Chinese interest in Indian goods and also proof, albeit oblique, that Sino-Indian trade links were operating in the early centuries of the modern era. Indeed, we learn from later sources that in the mid-2nd century A.D. merchants from India and the eastern lands of the Roman Empire brought 'tribute' from the South Seas in the form of tortoise-shell, ivory, cotton, eaglewood, amber and live animals—trained elephants, wild rhinoceroses and monkeys [v. 10, juan 89, 48a].

Sino-Indian cultural intercourse dates from the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C., when the two countries first opened communications, though it is possible that indirect cultural contact had been established very much earlier. Since considerable research has already been done in this field [v. 8, 6] and Shtein, in particular, has dedicated a major part of his book *Sino-Indian Economic and Cultural Links in Ancient Times* to it, we will limit ourselves to a brief summary of the fundamental issues.

First of all, it is essential to realise that there is no question of either side constituting the dominating influence; this is a partial approach to the issue which Shtein is correct to criticise [v. 8, 7]. From the very beginning the influences were bilateral.

Though we would be hard pressed to describe and precisely date particular instances of early Sino-Indian cultural exchange, it is certain that by the beginning of the first millennium A.D. considerable mutual benefit had been gained in medicine, mathematics, astronomy and metallurgy [v. 8, 116-132], and the development of Indian chemistry and alchemy also owed much to Chinese scholarship [v. 8, 121-126]. Shtein has a whole chapter on the transmission of silk and paper production from China to India. And chess,

an Indian invention, made its appearance in China at an early stage [v. 8, 132-133].

Indian influence on ancient Chinese philosophy and literature is evidenced by a similar approach to certain problems in natural philosophy and by mythological and religious parallels [v. 8, 90-116]. Shtein speaks in particular of the Indian impact on such Chinese ethical-philosophical treatises as *Zhuang-zi* and *Lie-zi* [v. 8, 36-39]. It must be remembered, however, that the Chinese classics were fundamentally re-worked in the first century B.C. and the early centuries of the first millennium A.D., so that Indian influences found in the written sources—notably the influence on Indian Buddhism—could stem from a later period, and not relate to the time when those works were first compiled. Here too, however, the effect was far from one-sided: Shtein, for example, mentions the impact of Chinese historiography on the Indian annalists [v. 8, 21].

One of the most significant events in the history of Sino-Indian cultural exchanges is the penetration of Buddhism into China. Shtein holds—and many scholars agree—that this process began at the dawn of the first millennium A.D. [v. 8, 149-150].

We spoke above of a Chinese mission sent to India at some time between 58 and 75 A.D. which, the *Hou Han shu* tells us, had been detailed to study Buddhism. Several scholars have proved sceptical about this embassy, since it is said to have been motivated by a miraculous dream which the Emperor had [v. 18, juan 88, 3826(4)]. This is, of course, an invention. Yet the story could have been disseminated by the Imperial court to justify the dispatch of an embassy to study a foreign religion, a move which might otherwise have been unacceptable to the devotees of contemporary Chinese cults. The existence of this legend, therefore, is no grounds on which to deny that the embassy itself took place. The same source also tells us that 'several' Chinese dignitaries were conversant with the cult of Buddha which existed in countries to the west of China.

From the mid-first century A.D. a Chinese Buddhist community was functioning in Pengcheng (in the north of Jiangsu province) and another formed in Luoyang at the end of the century [v. 8, 154-155]. It is commonly understood that the arrival of Indian monks in China in

response to the Chinese exploratory mission prompted the creation of these Buddhist groups and, further, that the 'White Horse', China's first Buddhist monastery, was built for the Indian Buddhists at some stage prior to 75 A.D. [v. 2, 239]. One of the first Buddhist temples in China was erected in Pengcheng at the close of the 2nd century A.D. and there were two Buddhist monasteries in Luoyang by the beginning of the 3rd century A.D. [v. 8, 156]. There is also reason to believe that a Buddhist centre opened in Nanking at about the same time [v. 8, 154]. The *Hou Han shu* indicates that the Chinese court began to take a special interest in the spread of Buddhism in China during the latter half of the 2nd century A.D. 'Emperor Huan-di (147-167 A.D.) loved divinity. He sacrificed repeatedly to Buddha and Laozi. The people gradually adopted this and subsequently deference to them spread widely and flourished [18, juan 88, 3826(1)].<sup>1</sup>

The impact of Buddhism on Sino-Indian cultural intercourse must not be underestimated: its impact on Chinese material and spiritual culture was manifold. Yet in the first and second centuries A.D. Buddhism in China was in its infancy. Its full effects were not felt until later.

After the fall of the extensive and centralised Han Empire in 220 A.D., the areas of northern and western China conquered by the Han were repeatedly subject to prolonged invasions by non-Chinese tribes. China itself was shaken by a mighty rising at the end of the 2nd century A.D., and, with the consequent weakening of central authority, civil wars became rife. The economy collapsed. All of this naturally told on Chinese foreign relations, especially in the case of India. There was a protracted break in diplomatic relations which the *Liang shu* describes as follows: 'During the Wei (220-264 A.D.) and Jin (265-420 A.D.) dynasties the embassies were halted and contacts no longer kept up' [11, juan 54, 8066(2)]. The abolition of Yongchang province shows the extent to which Chinese control over

<sup>1</sup> Scholars are much exercised by the question of the route by which Buddhism first began to penetrate into China: through northern India and Central Asia; from Burma, brought by missionary-monks; through northern Vietnam; or directly from India via the South Seas [for more details, 8, 150-151; 19, 9]. None of these suggestions has been substantiated to our satisfaction.

the routes to India had weakened [v. 6, 35].

The reduced number of references to India in the Chinese sources is further evidence of the lapse of official contacts: the *Jin shu*, an official history, does not refer to India at all and a 3rd/4th century source locates 'Indi' north of the Western Lands [v. 21, 47]. Yet this does not prove that interest in India had waned: we know, for example, that Zhu Ying and Kang Tai, two Chinese envoys who travelled in the South Seas during the mid-third century, were keen to learn about India, its location, customs and religion [v. 11, juan 54, 8066(3)], and that they included all they found out in a report of their journey—which, unfortunately, we possess only in brief fragments.

Official relations between India and China began to revive at the close of the 4th century A.D., thanks to an Indian initiative—for China was still suffering from political dislocation, foreign invasion and civil war. According to the Chinese sources, the first Indian embassy after the lengthy interval arrived in 381 A.D. [v. 21, 46]. The Indian interest in keeping up diplomatic links—which in turn would encourage Sino-Indian trade—is vividly illustrated by the fact that envoys who came from Kapilavastu in 428 A.D. expressed the desire of their ruler, a scion of the Gupta dynasty, to set up an 'uninterrupted exchange of embassies' [16, juan 97, 7036(2)].

The Indian commitment to the maintenance of diplomatic contact with China became even more evident in the early 6th century. No less than 18 Indian missions entered China in the course of 21 years, six of them in the one year of 511 [21, 69-71].

The break in diplomatic relations had not held up the development of economic and cultural intercourse. From the 3rd century fairly large numbers of Chinese Buddhists began to enter India, to visit the holy places and study Indian religious and scientific texts, while Indian Buddhist missionaries continued their journeys to China. This two-way movement went on into the 10th century A.D., by sea and land: at the end of the 3rd century, for example, 20 Chinese Buddhist pilgrims reached India through Upper Burma and Assam [6, 35].

One of the earliest well-known Chinese pilgrims was Tao Nan, who made his journey to India circa 316 A.D., and

wrote a travelogue which is now unfortunately lost [v. 5, vol. 2, 47]. Zhang Xi-lang tells us of 54 Indian Buddhists and 64 Chinese pilgrims who journeyed around the sub-continent [21, 128-247, 274-421]. In the 5th and 6th centuries a total of 18 Indian monks of high religious standing did the round trip to China by sea [19, 31-35]. Some pilgrims, of course, chose different routes for their return journey. Fa Xian, the celebrated Chinese traveller, entered India in 399 A.D. through the Western Lands and returned to China in 415 via the port of Tamralipti, situated near the Ganges delta.

At approximately the same time that Fa Xian was in India, Buddabhadra, an Indian Buddhist, was travelling in China. Arriving by sea circa 389 A.D., he remained in China for close on 30 years, translating many of the classic Buddhist texts into Chinese, some of them in collaboration with Fa Xian [v. 5, vol. 2, 41-42].

Among the later Chinese pilgrims in India, two have become particularly famous. Xuan Zang reached India via Central Asia, and during the period from approximately 629 to 645 A.D. visited most parts of the country, including Bengal. He returned to China by the Central Asian land route. Yi Jing left for India via the South Seas, Ceylon and Bengal in approximately 671 A.D. and returned home in 693/4 A.D.

This movement of missionaries and pilgrims was one of the external signs of the extensive dissemination of Buddhism in China; by the middle of the first millennium A.D. it had permeated many aspects of Chinese material and spiritual life, giving a powerful boost to more general Indian cultural influences in China. Besides its purely religious and philosophical impact, it left palpable traces on Chinese architecture, representative art (particularly plastic art), music, literature, and language, as well as on various branches of science such as astronomy, mathematics and medicine.

There are numerous and varied instances of cultural gain. The Chinese pagoda was a modification of an Indian architectural form, the prototype of which is that celebrated tower of Kanishka at Peshawar [v. 2, 240]; the *stupa* was also borrowed from Indian architecture [v. 23, 33]. The murals in the Dunhuang cave-temples show great similarities to the wall paintings in the temples of Ajanta [v. 23, 30].

Some researchers also see sign of Indian influence in Chinese theories of art, drawing a parallel between the Indian 'Six Branches' and the 'Six Rules' which underpinned Chinese art from the 5th century A.D. [v. 23, 31]. The rock-cut images of Yunchang (in Shanxi province) and at Longmeng (in Henan) are clearly indebted to Gupta and Gandhara models [v. 2, 240]. And, finally, Indian sculptural influences can be traced in the art of Dunhuang and the cave-temples of Jiangsu [v. 23, 32].

Buddhist music was held in high regard by several Chinese Emperors and was widely accepted in China during the 6th century A.D. The Liang court (first half of the 6th century) employed musicians who played nine Indian instruments, and the Sui and Tang emperors maintained troupes of Indian musicians, dancers and acrobats [v. 23, 33-34]. The development of Chinese theatrical traditions also owes much to India [v. 23, 29].

Several Buddhist themes became an integral part of Chinese literature and certain familiar characters of Indian literature have entered the Chinese classical heritage [v. 23, 29-30].

One tentative assessment suggests that Buddhism had introduced 35,000 new words and expressions into the Chinese language by the 10th century [8, 14]. Indian Buddhists tried to popularise alphabetic scripts, one known as the Brahman script and another similar to Sanscrit, in China [v. 8, 15]; Shen Wen, a Chinese monk, also worked on an alphabet based on Sanscrit [v. 3, 205]. Translations of Indian Buddhist works, which appeared from the 4th to the 10th centuries, helped Chinese scholars in their study of Sanscrit and Pali, while Indian missionaries learned and taught Chinese and Chinese pilgrims performed a reciprocal service. Some Indian missionaries in China wrote original works in Chinese [v. 3, 200]. Certain of the most ancient Chinese printed books are in Sanscrit [v. 3, 205], and inscriptions in Bengali have been discovered in a temple in Peking [v. 2, 240]. An outstanding example of this linguistic interaction is a Sanscrit-Tibetan-Chinese dictionary of technical terms, which dates from the 9th/10th century A.D. [v. 3, 205].

It was not only religious works that were translated into Chinese. By the end of the 6th century, 20 Indian works on

astronomy were available in Chinese [v. 23, 13], and in 718 A.D. there appeared a Chinese translation of Indian methods of calendar computation, which Chinese scholars and commentators later worked on and developed [v. 23, 15-16]. *Indian Mathematics*, a compendium-translation, produced early in the 7th century, was followed by several mathematical works under the general title of *The Mathematical Sytras* [v. 23, 16].

Chinese scientists became acquainted with Indian medicine in the 3rd century A.D.; by the early 7th century almost 100 medical works had been translated into Chinese [v. 23, 18]. Among those who benefited from the services of the Indian doctors practising in China were the Tang emperors Taizong and Gaozong [v. 23, 19]. A Tang poet wrote an ode in honour of an Indian oculist [v. 23, 18].

Indians were also active in other spheres of Chinese life. The Chinese annals of the 7th and 8th centuries name Indian members of the Imperial astronomical commission [v. 23, 14-15]. One of the Tang emperors became a disciple of Jivagupta, an Indian missionary [v. 3, 200]. There were 3,000 Indian monks in Luoyang region alone during the 6th century [3, 200].

China did not, of course, adopt Buddhism and Indian culture mechanically; they were reworked, adapted to local conditions, in a protracted process which culminated in the organic blend we see in architecture, sculpture and many other fields. And finally there emerged Chinese Buddhism proper—a religion which differed substantially from its parent creed. Shtein, referring to the decline of Buddhism in India during the Middle Ages, asserts that its centre was transferred to China, where it was reinterpreted and developed [v. 8, 13].

Again we emphasise that the rapid spread of Indian influences in China was not a one-way process. We know, for instance, that an Indian ruler showed a lively interest in Taoism and had the *Daodejing* translated into his native language [8, 11].

Interaction also occurred on a material level. The Indians learned the use of coal as fuel and the cultivation of tea and the *lizhi* tree from the Chinese [v. 8, 16, 22], while the Chinese owe certain medicines [v. 20, juan 98, 1538(3)-(4)] and cultivated pepper to the Indians. In the mid-seventh

century a Chinese embassy was sent to India to study sugar-cane farming [v. 13, juan 221(1), 16968(3)].

The two-way exchange of Buddhist monks was also of more than purely religious significance: it expanded geographical awareness in both countries and deepened their mutual understanding. Fa Xian, for example, wrote *Fo Guo ji* (A Description of Buddhist countries), Xuan Zang wrote *Da tang xi yu ji* (A Description of the Western Lands in the Era of the Great Tang Dynasty), and Yi Jing wrote *Dai Tang xiyu gaoliang zhuan* (Biographies of Monks from the Western Lands during the Reign of the Great Tang Dynasty) and *Nanhai ji gui nei fa fu* (A Description of the Present-Day Buddhism from the Countries of the South Seas). These works are a rich source of information about the history and culture of contemporary India. And Song Yun, who visited India circa 518 A.D., brought 172 Indian manuscripts home with him [v. 5, vol. 2, 49].

Meanwhile Sino-Indian trade continued to flourish. On the heels of the monks, along the same routes, flowed an ever-increasing stream of merchants: Fa Xian, in fact, returned to China on a merchant ship. The Chinese sources record that Chinese merchants reached India in the 3rd century A.D. [v. 21, 43]. The Chinese brought back spices, pearls, precious stones, ivory, and fine examples of Indian craftsmanship, and in return China exported silk, copperware, medicines, earthenware or ceramics, and, later, porcelain to India.

Since the north-western areas of China suffered most from tribal incursions and internal conflict during the 4th to 6th centuries, the southern provinces and the southern sea route became increasingly important in Imperial foreign trade; from the 7th/8th centuries, Muslim traders from the Middle East gained the dominant position on this route. India was also drawn into this trade network, for the Muslim merchants made their way to the Far East along the Indian coast, Chinese merchants also began to use this route with increasing frequency. We see from the writings of Jia Dan (730-805 A.D.) that by the 8th century the Chinese had a precise and detailed knowledge of the sea route from Guangzhou to Baghdad [v. 13, juan 43(3), 15720 (2)-(4)]; he also records that they covered the entire distance in 90 days [v. 7, 45].



Official Sino-Indian contacts again quickened in the 7th century, due to a change in the political situation in both countries. Over the turn of the 6th century the Sui and Tang dynasties unified the Chinese Empire. Early in the 7th century the Harsha Empire emerged in northern India, and shortlived as it was, gave the necessary boost to interstate relations.

Wei Jie and Du Huan, Chinese envoys sent to Central Asia by the Sui Emperor Yang-di early in the 7th century, also visited Kashmir [v. 22, 94-95].

An embassy from Harsha that arrived in China in 641 A.D. left a declaration of Imperial 'favour' [v. 20, juan 198, 15383(1)], which encouraged Harsha to repeat the initiative. The Indian envoys were received with great pomp; Li Yi-biao, sent with a reciprocal embassy to Harsha, was given similar treatment. A third Harsha mission was then dispatched with gifts for the Emperor [v. 20, juan 198, 15383(1)].

The fall of the Harsha Empire in 647 A.D. interrupted these promising beginnings. On their arrival in northern India in 648 A.D., the envoy Wang Xuan-ce and his aide Jiang Shi-ren found themselves entangled in an internecine power struggle. One of the local feudal lords attacked them and killed almost their entire entourage. Wang Xuan-ce escaped to the lands of the Tufan (Tibet), where he belied his ambassadorial calling by enrolling horsemen from the local tribes—some 8,000 in all—and launching an attack on northern India [v. 13, juan 221(1), 16968(1)-(2)].

He won a number of victories in the fragmented, distressed area that had been the Harsha Empire: according to the Chinese sources his troops took some 580 towns and villages, massacring and enslaving the local people and seizing cattle and other booty as they went [13, juan 221(1), 16968(2)].

Wang Xuan-ce forced some of the rulers in northern India to send maps of their lands to the Chinese Emperor, an act which was viewed in China as a symbol of submission. And on his return to the Imperial court in Changan, the former ambassador presented one of the captured Indian rulers to his Emperor. It is interesting to note that the court thoroughly approved his actions. Sacrifices were even made in the temple of the Emperor's ancestors [v. 13, juan 221(1),

16968(2)] to give thanks for what he had done.

We have reason to believe that Wang Xuan-ce was in northern India three times, for protracted periods, between 648 and 664 A.D. [v. 23, 40]. He wrote *Zhong Tianzhu guo xing ji* (Notes on a Journey to Middle India), a book in 10 chapters [v. 21, 77] which, unfortunately, we possess only in the form of fragments in other medieval Chinese works.

Official relations between China and India developed henceforth along more normal diplomatic lines. The sources specify five relatively large domains which maintained independent links with the Imperial court: Middle, Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western India. It appears from a comparison of the various sources that during the 7th and 8th centuries the most active contact was that between China and Middle and Southern India; the other three domains sent envoys only sporadically [v. 20, juan 198, 15373(3); 13, juan 221(1), 16968(2)-(3); 21, 88-90].

There is a separate record of numerous embassies from Kashmir [v. 21, 95-96; 20, juan 198, 15383 (4); 3, juan 221 (1), 16968(4)]. The *Xin Tang shu* also mentions the arrival of envoys from Nage—Nagarahara—in 646 A.D. and an embassy from Wucha—Wudiani in 648 [v. 13, juan 221(1), 16968(3)]. Both these countries lay just within India's north-western border. Individual mission also came from Ceylon [v. 13, juan 221(1), 16973(1); 21, 102].

The Chinese sources are practically silent on Chinese embassies to India after Wang Xuan-ce. Only a few laconic and oblique references—to a mission sent to the Ganges by the Tang Emperor Taizong in 647 and another to Southern India in 720, for example [v. 13, juan 221(1), 16968(3); 20, juan 198, 15383(3)]—give us an idea that diplomatic contact was kept up at all by the Chinese side. It must not be forgotten, however, that, since Buddhism was in high official favour during the 7th and early 8th centuries, many Chinese pilgrims to India also carried out Imperial commissions. One proof of this is the journey of Xuan Zang and the splendid court reception that marked his return [v. 8, 8].

But there is no doubt that more Indian embassies went to China than vice versa. The Tang dynasty preferred to conduct its diplomatic intercourse in this way.

What were the diplomatic functions of those missions? The sparse information in the Chinese sources could leave

one with the impression that their main purpose was to 'deliver tribute', which, as we noted above, was a specific means of organising centralised (state) commercial relations. And yet the embassies did serve certain purely diplomatic ends. The ruler of Southern India, for example, sought the moral support of China for his campaign against the Arabs and the Tufan in 720 A.D.; his ambassadors asked the Emperor to send a message of praise to his troops. The Imperial court, flattered and eager to exploit this opportunity of asserting its sovereignty, replied by naming the Indian forces 'the army full of virtue' [v. 20, juan 198, 15383(3)]. We assume that the Indian ruler in question launched this initiative in order to protect his flank from Chinese interference.

Foreign rulers were often awarded the title of *wang* in a Chinese diplomatic manoeuvre aimed at exalting the Emperor and strengthening external links. The rulers of Southern India, Kashmir and Belore became *wangs* in 720 A.D. [v. 21, 89; 20, juan 198, 15383(4)]. Shortly afterwards the ruler of Kashmir used this in his own interests: wishing to transmit the throne to his son and seeking ways of increasing the latter's prestige, he sent envoys to China in 738 A.D. to ask the Emperor to confirm the new ruler in his position. The Imperial court, pleased by the request, rapidly and willingly complied by naming him the *wang* of Kashmir [v. 21, 95-96].

Envoys sent to China were given presents, and the more distinguished among them also received honorary titles. The son of the ruler of Middle India, for example, was awarded an honorary military title in 741 A.D. [v. 20, juan 198, 15383(3)], as did a dignitary arriving from Gandhara in 758 [v. 21, 90].

We see, therefore, that the two sides had different aims in maintaining diplomatic relations, and that the Chinese initiatives increasingly reflected the methods used to nourish the illusion of Chinese sovereignty over all lands and peoples.

From the latter half of the 8th century diplomatic and cultural intercourse slackened, partly due to the Arab conquest of north-western India and the political decline of the Tang Empire, which began in the 8th century and became even more evident later. The land routes between China and India came under pressure as the Tufan, who

lived on China's western border and fought the Empire in the later 8th century, waxed in strength, and from the mid-ninth century the flow of Indian missionaries decreased significantly, as Islam spread throughout Northern India and Buddhism lost its dominant position in China.

After the fall of the Tang dynasty in 907 A.D., China entered another period of political fragmentation and the northern provinces became an almost permanent battleground. Even when most of China was reunited under the Song dynasty around 960 A.D., the north-west remained beyond Imperial control. During the 11th century the Tangut state of Xi-Xia attained a position of considerable power on China's western border, and by the dawn of the 12th century the Song controlled only the southern half of China.

From the 10th to the 12th centuries Northern India was suffering from similar dislocation and from foreign invasions, which further retarded the development of Sino-Indian contacts along the Central Asian land route.

But the links were not severed completely. In the 10th century both sides laid almost the entire responsibility for the continuance of official relations on Buddhist pilgrims and monks, who continued to travel between India and China, though less frequently than before. In 953 A.D. a 16-man Northern Indian embassy headed by monks brought horses—highly prized in China—for the ruler of Zhou [v. 15, juan 490, 24140(4)]. Chinese pilgrims returned home in 963 with gifts for the Emperor and in 982 a message from the Northern Indian rajahs reached China by the same method [v. 15, juan 490, 24140(4)-24141(1)]. The son of one of the Northern Indian rulers, who came to China in 975, can be considered the sole secular envoy of this period [v. 15, juan 490, 24141(1)].

But the numbers of missionaries and pilgrims fell steadily: the last large group of Chinese Buddhists—157 of them—left for India via Central Asia during the 960s. The official aim of this mission, which was expressly approved by the Emperor, was to collect classic Buddhist texts [v. 15, juan 490, 24140(4)-24141(1)]. The last Chinese monk arrived in India circa 1033 and the last two Indian missionary expeditions to China took place in 1036 and 1053 [8, 29].

China's political upheavals in the 10th to 12th centuries

affected the southern and south-eastern provinces least of all. Trade continued to flourish and towns to expand there, and the Song capital was established in Hanzhou some time after 1127. The south became the centre of Chinese political and economic life. At more or less the same time, early in the 11th century, the Southern Indian state of Chola began to prosper, gaining an ascendancy over almost all the Tamil states of Southern India and sending its powerful fleet to conquer Ceylon, the Maldives and the Andaman and Nicobar islands. Thus, though Sino-Indian links through northern India and western China were hampered by objective circumstances, conditions in the south began to favour intercourse along the maritime routes.

The first official embassy from Chola, consisting of 52 members and headed by an ambassador, landed in 1015 [15, *juan* 489, 24138], bringing lavish gifts—pearls, ivory, perfumes and glassware—for the Emperor, and a message from Rajaraja expressing his desire to enter into close ties with China.

Chola's motivation in this was twofold. Firstly, good relations with China would discourage Chinese interference in Chola's invasion of Lower Burma. Rajaraja's extraordinarily generous gifts were sent with this aim in mind, and the magnificent reception accorded the embassy, the lavish presents sent by the Emperor in return show that Chola had scored a diplomatic success.

Secondly, Rajaraja wanted to initiate maritime trade with China and was aware that it would only be successful if preceded by the establishment of official relations. That is what lay behind the statement in his letter to the Emperor that he had gleaned his knowledge of China from merchants involved in maritime trade with the East [v. 15, *juan* 489, 24138(4)].

By the 11th/12th centuries the 'tribute' sent to China consisted of outright gifts for the Imperial court and goods bought by the Imperial treasury. The variety of 'tribute' is evidenced by a list of the items brought by an embassy from Chola in 1077: glass, large wash-basins, perfume flasks, camphor, rhinoceros horn, mastic, rose oil, peas, golden lotus seeds, narcotics, medicinal climbing roses, aloes, cardamon and cloves [v. 15, 489, 24139(3)-(4)]. Besides all this, the envoys brought their own stocks of pearls and

various kinds of camphor.

It was in China's interests, too, to develop maritime trade along the southern routes. In the 11th and 12th centuries the Song Empire, being under permanent pressure in the north and north-west, had adopted a conciliatory foreign policy and pursued no ambitious ends in its diplomatic relations with neighbouring countries, including India. But naturally it did not waste the opportunity to profit from both official and private maritime trade. Private trade was at its zenith from the 11th century to the first half of the 13th century.

At about this time Chinese merchants occupied in long-distance, primarily maritime, trade began to spend long periods overseas and even to settle abroad. We believe that the first Chinese settlers appeared in Southern India around the middle of the 13th century [21, 464-465]. The Mongol conquest of China, which began early in the 13th century and was completed by 1279, must certainly have increased the exodus of Chinese emigrants.

Once firmly established in China, the Mongol Yuan dynasty began by maintaining the traditional diplomatic contacts with India, also using them as a commercial channel. The first official contacts were established with Malabar (in south-western India) in 1271; the return mission arrived in China two years later [v. 21, 485]. The next objectives were Mahabar (on the south-east coast) and Quilon, which were visited by a Chinese embassy headed by Suo Du in 1277 and 1278 [v. 27, 472-473]. Mahabar responded by dispatching an embassy which delivered to the Yuan court a declaration of 'vassal dependence' [v. 21, 473]. In view of the distance between the two states, this meant little but assured Mahabar of favourable conditions for the maritime trade that was so important to her.

Quilon's failure to react to the Chinese initiative prompted a discussion at the Yuan court. It was suggested that Suo Du be sent again, but the Emperor preferred to commission Yang Ting-bi, a Guangdong dignitary, to force envoys out of the ruler of Quilon come what may. At the turn of 1278 Yang Ting-bi returned to China bringing the ruler's younger brother, whom he had more or less kidnapped, and bearing a verbal assurance that a 'tributary' embassy would shortly arrive [v. 21, 473]. But the embassy never materialised.

Realising that his dread hand could hardly reach as far as Southern India, the Yuan Emperor decided to try the 'merciful' approach. Yang Ting-bi left China again in 1280, to deliver the title of *xuanweishi*—governor of a foreign region—to the ruler of Quilon. But his ships were blown off course and landed in Mahabar, where they were given a warm welcome. Yet another Mahabar embassy set out for China [v. 21, 473].

Hearing that Yang Ting-bi was returning without having reached the assigned objective, the Emperor ordered him to turn around immediately, which he did. The Quilon mission, which arrived in 1281, was the fruit of his efforts [21, 474, 484].

This shows how highly the Imperial court rated diplomatic contacts with distant countries and proves that such contacts were not always easy to establish. Relations with Quilon, in fact, were never cemented, though Yang Ting-bi delivered the bow and arrows and harness due to a *xuanweishi* and also a gold *paiza* (a sceptre used by Imperial plenipotentiaries—*trans.*) [v. 21, 484]. In 1284 Quilon sent its second—and last—embassy to the Yuan court [v. 21, 484]. Yang Ting-bi went on a lengthy tour in 1285, ordering the several overseas countries he visited to 'submit', but no embassy from that recalcitrant state appeared among the reciprocal missions [v. 21, 474].

On the other hand, official relations with Mahabar, closely linked with official commerce, were lively in the 1270s to 1290s. The last Mahabar embassy to the Yuan court arrived in 1314 [v. 21, 483]. Diplomatic exchange with Ceylon was fairly intensive at the end of the 13th century too [v. 21, 480], and sporadic contact was maintained with the smaller states of Hindustan, such as Tana on the north-west coast, Maravi on the west coast, and the Maldive islands [v. 21, 484-486].

In the early 14th century this official intercourse declined sharply. Envoys were sent in 1341/1342 to Mohammed Tughlak (1325-1351), the greatest ruler of the Delhi Sultanate, but did not reach their objective [21, 478], and Ibn Batuta, the Arab traveller sent to China by the Sultan of Delhi in 1342, did not get to China until several years later, by which time his official status had lapsed [v. 5, vol. 3,

208-209].<sup>1</sup> With the exception of this one episode, diplomatic activity slackened off in the early and mid-fourteenth century, due to the determined efforts of the Yuan dynasty to limit private trade—that is, trade links which functioned independently of official channels—between China and countries overseas. This limitation began to take effect at the end of the 13th century and continued into the 1320s.

While attempting to assert its control over private trade, the Yuan court also ceased to maintain the diplomatic links which had served the merchants as a shield for their private operations. Moreover, as Mongol power in China began to wane around the mid-fourteenth century, the Yuan dynasty, fully occupied in putting down widespread uprisings, had little interest in diplomatic exchanges.

The emergence of the huge Mongol Empire in Asia in the 13th century had stimulated contacts between the Middle and Far East along the land routes. The great silk route again attained its former importance. The north-western regions of India were drawn into the caravan trade between China and the West, and the great ports of the Malabar and Coromandel coasts continued their maritime trade with southern and eastern China. The fact that European missionaries and ambassadors travelled along the Sino-Indian routes shows that they were still in regular use in the 13th and 14th centuries: Giovanni de'Montecorvino reached China via India circa 1294, and Giovanni de'Marignolli (1346) and Marco Polo left China to return home via India [v. 5, vol. 3, 150, 228]. Marco Polo, who lived in China from 1275 to 1292, reported that the Chinese ports were full of Indian merchant vessels, and vice versa. Though wishing to limit and control private trade, the Yuan court was eager to encourage official trade: in 1284, for example, the Yuan Emperor commissioned envoys named Ali and Masuhu—evidently transcriptions of Muslim names—to buy gems in Mahabar [v. 21, 482].

The Indian merchants were also affected by the Yuan desire to limit private foreign trade. A special decree in 1286, for instance, forbade trade in 'fine goods'—high-

<sup>1</sup> Thus Chin Keh-mu's assertion that China and India exchanged ambassadors in 1341-1342 is obviously mistaken [v. 23, 42].



quality items and valuables—with Mahabar and Quilon [v. 21, 490].

Sino-Indian cultural exchange continued into the 13th and 14th centuries, as Islam penetrated ever more deeply into China, thanks partly to direct Sino-Arab links and partly to the fact that Islam had become the state religion in the Delhi Sultanate and was making great strides in India as a whole. We must bear in mind, however, that, as Islam made considerably less headway in China than Buddhism had, its impact on Chinese culture and ideology was less remarkable. One example of Chinese influence on the Delhi Sultanate was the attempt by Mohammed Tughlak to introduce paper money, which had been current in China since the end of the 13th century [v. 8, 17-18]. The experiment was admittedly less successful than it had been in China.

Ibn Batuta's description of a temple on the Ganges delta states that it was a place of Chinese pilgrimage [5, 2, 50]. This could indicate that individual Chinese Buddhists were still travelling to India up to the mid-fourteenth century—though the 'pilgrims' could equally well have been Chinese merchants taking advantage of their stay in India to visit the holy places.

In the late 14th and 15th centuries India was not a centralised state: the Delhi Sultanate controlled only the areas around Delhi and in the Punjab; the only other relatively large states were Bahmani, Vijayanagar and Bengal. The rest of India was a profusion of small independent and semi-independent principalities. China, on the other hand, was by then free of the Mongol yoke and beginning to flourish under the strong and centralised Ming dynasty (1368-1644). By the late 1380s it embraced the area from the border with Manchuria and the Liaodong peninsula in the north to what are now the provinces of Yunnan, Guangdong and Guangxi in the south. In the west, however, much of the great silk route remained outside Chinese control, and the mighty and aggressive Empire of Tamerlane, which encompassed large tracts of Central Asia from the late 14th century, was a constant threat well into the 15th century. These factors led the Ming Empire to seek contact with southern Asia along the sea routes, though attempts to establish relations with India via Upper Burma

and even through Tibet continued.

The earliest Ming diplomatic successes were with Chola (in 1369) and Mahabar (in 1370) [v. 12, juan 325, 31780 (3)-(4)]. Reciprocal embassies shortly appeared in China, and the ruler of Mahabar sent a map of his domains [v. 12, juan 325, 31780(4)]—a move which had undoubtedly been suggested to him by the Chinese envoys. The Ming Emperor sent lavish gifts in return as a sign of his satisfaction. Both countries also received Chinese calendrical tables, which all Imperial 'vassals' had to use for dating official documents [v. 12, juan 325, 31780(3)-(4)].

Thus we see that the Ming dynasty from the outset placed great store on the purely diplomatic gains to be made through official contacts. This aspect of Ming policy became more evident in the early 15th century, when Imperial power and expansionist urges were at their apogee. In 1403 Chinese envoys again landed in Chola and another mission headed by Ma Bin arrived there shortly afterwards [v. 12, juan 325, 31780(3)-(4)]. In 1403/4 a large diplomatic mission under Ying Qing included Calicut and Cochin, southern India's most flourishing international commercial ports, on its itinerary [v. 12, juan 326, 31788(1), 31788(3)]. Ying Qing brought envoys to China on his own ships. A mission was also sent from Chola.

After Ying Qing's journey it became more common to see flotillas of Chinese ships, carrying anything up to 30,000 people, ranging far from home. These naval expeditions, described as embassies, were intended to demonstrate China's 'might' and to arrange diplomatic and commercial relations with the maximum number of overseas countries, thereby supporting the Chinese Emperor's claims to sovereignty over the entire world.

The most famous of these many expeditions in the early 15th century were those headed by Zheng He, one of the court eunuchs. From 1405 to 1433 he made seven long-distance sea journeys, making landfall on the Indian coast on each occasion and visiting Calicut, Cochin, Quilon, Kail, and the Gulf of Cambay several times. He also went to the Maldives and the coast of Ceylon. Zheng He did not always limit himself to diplomacy and trade, however: in 1410 in Ceylon, his men clashed with the troops of a local feudal lord, whom they defeated and carried off to China in

chains [v. 12, juan 326, 31790(1)].

Among similar expeditions we would single out Hu Xian's mission to Bengal in 1415. Our sources tell us that the envoys were met there by some 1,000 horsemen and court dignitaries in ceremonial regalia, and led through ranks of guards in glittering armour, to where some 100 war elephants were lined up before the palace gates. Finally masters of ceremonies took the envoys into the palace, to attend the ceremonial audience arranged for them [v. 12, juan 326, 31791(2)-(3)].

In 1420 Hu Xian led another mission, this time accompanied by soldiers, across the Himalayas into various parts of north-east India, including Bengal and, apparently, Jaunpur [v. 12, juan 326, 31791(3)-(4)]. The Bengalis had asked China to intervene in a war between themselves and Jaunpur, but the sources are unfortunately silent on the extent to which Hu Xian achieved his aim. We must assume that he failed, since the ruler of Jaunpur is known to have refused to send an embassy to China, on the grounds that the distances involved were too great [v. 12, juan 326, 31791(4)].

Apart from Hu Xian's embassy of 1420, the only other mission to reach India along the land route was one which visited Jaunpur and Delhi in 1412 [v. 12, juan 326, 31791(3), 31794(4)]: the sea routes bore the heaviest diplomatic and commercial traffic. It is claimed however, that one of the aims of the war with Upper Burma, which continued sporadically from 1438 to 1465, was to secure the land route to north-western India [6, 124]. If this *was* the aim of the war, the Chinese fought in vain. But we gather that individual Sino-Indian contacts along this route continued, for Nicolo de Conti, a European missionary who arrived in China during the first half of the 15th century, is said to have come through India and Upper Burma [v. 5, juan 4, 47-48].

Maritime contacts between China and various parts of India in the early 15th century, on the other hand, were lively indeed. From 1409, for instance, Bengali embassies visited China annually [v. 12, juan 326, 31791(1)]. Indian rulers were motivated by the possibility of commercial profit, and some of them clearly intended to make an indelible impression: the Bengali embassy of 1409, for example, comprised

230 people [12, juan 326, 31791(1)], and certain southern Indian states made similarly grandiose gestures.

Ming policy acted as a brake on maritime trade from the 1370s to the mid-fifteenth century—though the Emperors, in order not to harm their foreign policy, made certain concessions to private trade throughout this period, and especially to those foreign merchants who were operating within China. Envoys from Chola brought black pepper with them on one occasion, intending to sell it privately. The local mandarins wrote to the Emperor, asking if this could be permitted, and, if so, what tax should be exacted. Permission was readily given and no taxes levied [v. 12, juan 325, 31780(4)].

Cultural intercourse also continued, though less intensively than in the 3rd to 10th centuries. Zheng He took advice from Indian sailors in his journeys along the Indian coastline and to the Persian Gulf and Africa—in particular on the direct route from the African coast to the Maldives and India which he followed on his return.

Meanwhile, Chinese knowledge of India was increasing steadily, as we see from the *Sea Maps of Zheng He* and the works of Ma Huan, Fei Xin and Gong Zhen, members of Zheng He's expeditions, who described the climate, customs and urban industries of various parts of India.

The tradition of mutual influence in architecture was still active in the 15th century. The Wutasi temple in Peking, for instance, was built with the help of Indian architects and reflects Indian influence [v. 23, 33], while in India the compass and gunpowder, both Chinese inventions, came into extensive use at this time.

But from the 1440s diplomatic contacts between China and countries overseas, including India, declined significantly, due largely to the social and political crisis of the Ming Empire. Private trade, however, appeared not to suffer at all.

The first ships from Western Europe appeared on the coast of Hindustan in 1498, and before long European colonisers were ranging through the Far East, seizing control of the sea routes to China. In the 16th century China, made apprehensive by the attacks of Japanese pirates and the Portuguese conquistadors, had begun to shut down all external maritime contacts. It was at this stage that diplomatic relations between China and India were completely severed.

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A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF  
CHINESE RELATIONS WITH  
THE COUNTRIES  
OF THE SOUTH SEAS  
(FROM ANCIENT TIMES  
TO THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY)

The emergence of diplomatic, cultural and commercial contacts between China and the countries of the South Seas hinged directly on the development of seafaring in the Far East and the establishment of Chinese influence over the coastal areas of the East China and South China seas. The peoples of the South Seas had long been intimately connected with the sea through fishing, inter-island communications and maritime trade: the Malayan and Polynesian settlements in Madagascar at the dawn of the modern age attest to the high level of seacraft displayed by those peoples in ancient times [v. 5, 153]. Malayan pilots were much sought after in the East even in those days [v. 7, 1, 233].

The Chinese took to the sea in earnest during the 5th or 4th centuries B.C.;<sup>1</sup> by the end of the 3rd century, according to reliable sources, a government fleet had been formed, and a war fleet was founded early in Wu-di's reign (140-87 B.C.) [v. 9, 21, 23]. To that point Chinese vessels had not ventured beyond the Gulf of Po Hai and the Yellow Sea.

The coastal provinces of what is now south-east and south China were inhabited by non-Chinese tribes and peoples, the ancestors of the Vietnamese and Thais: the Eastern Ou and the Minyue, who were subject to the

<sup>1</sup> Ancient and medieval Chinese annalists and scholars, following the tradition of lauding the 'golden age' of distant antiquity, date the beginning of Chinese seafaring to the 3rd millennium B.C., a time now swathed in legend [v. 7, vol. 1, 232]. We can hardly take such claims at face value.

Kingdom of the Western Yue, the Southern Yue and the Western Ou. Though the Chinese conquered these territories at the end of the 3rd century B.C., navigation in the South Seas remained in the hands of the local people [v. 9, 22], and shortly after the fall of the Qin dynasty (207 B.C.), the Ou and Yue regained their independence from China.

In the 5th to 3rd centuries B.C., Panyu (now Guangzhou) was a thriving commercial port, and the Yue, experienced mariners, had direct links with the South Seas. Indeed, the Chinese sources state that commercial contact between China and that part of the world was first made through the 'Man barbarians'—that is, the Yue [v. 9, 22].<sup>1</sup> The *Qian Han shu*, for example, records that rhinoceroses, elephants, tortoises, pearls, silver, bronze and foreign fabrics reached Yue from the countries of the South Seas, which 'lay beyond Yue territory', and that the Chinese merchants who traded there made tremendous profits [v. 11, juan 28 (2), 1632(2)].

It is possible that Chinese traders sailed southwards on Yue ships prior to the 2nd century B.C., though nothing in the sources directly confirms this: the first unquestionable reference to direct Chinese contact with the South Seas is found in juan 28 of the *Qian Han shu*, which, as mentioned above (p. 112) is mainly concerned with the period around the turn of the 2nd century B.C.—an assumption based on the fact that the ports named in it were included in the Han Empire from about 112-110 B.C., as a result of the Chinese conquest of Namviet (Vietnam).

The relevant section of the *Qian Han shu* entry reads: 'Leaving the forts of Xuwen and Hepu,<sup>2</sup> which are on the border with Rinan,<sup>3</sup> vessels can reach Duyuan<sup>4</sup> after a five-month voyage. In another four months they can reach the lands of Yilumei,<sup>5</sup> and in something over 20 more

<sup>1</sup> 'Man' was an inclusive designation for the peoples who inhabited the area now covered by the southern provinces of China.

<sup>2</sup> Xuwen and Hepu were sub-districts within what is now Guangdong province.

<sup>3</sup> An administrative region in north Vietnam occupied by the Chinese.

<sup>4</sup> In the environs of Pase, in north-western Sumatra.

<sup>5</sup> The area around Thaton in Lower Burma, west of the Salween River.



days—the lands of Chenli.<sup>1</sup> At a distance which takes more than 10 days to cover on foot lies the land of Fugandulu....<sup>2</sup> From the times of Wu-di and subsequently [those lands] have sent gifts and [envoys] to [the Emperor]. There were senior interpreters, subordinate to the chamber of the Huangmen,<sup>3</sup> who set sail with those who had offered their allegiance for the voyage ... they took with them gold and various kinds of thick silk; (in distant lands) they bought pearls and gems, glass, rare stones and marvellous wares...<sup>4</sup> [11, juan 28(2), 1632(3)-1633(1)].

The *Qian Han shu* goes on to state that the Chinese envoys went to Southern India and Ceylon, and adds that on their return they put in at Pinzong (the island of Pisang off the south-west tip of Malacca) and reached Rinan after a two-month voyage [v. 11, 28(2), 1633(1)].

Official contact was thus established between China and north-west Sumatra, certain areas of Lower Burma and some of the smaller islands of the Indonesian archipelago—and possibly other areas too. In describing southern India, the *Qian Han shu* compares it with the obviously already familiar Zhuyai—the ‘Pearl coast’—which could be the east coast of the Indochina peninsula or the northern

<sup>1</sup> The area around Pagan in Burma.

<sup>2</sup> Ancient Pagan, close to the town of Gagaung.

<sup>3</sup> Pelliot translates this term as ‘the court administration’, explaining that it consisted of court eunuchs. Feng Cheng-jun holds that these units were subordinate to the Imperial exchequer [v. 26, 2]. In the dictionaries *Cihai* and *Ciyuan* the term is defined as an establishment where both eunuchs and ordinary mandarins worked. *Huangmen* was still current at the turn of this century, as one of the designations of the censors in the capital [v. 1].

<sup>4</sup> We are indebted to Ferrand [v. 39] and Fujita [v. 25, 85-115] for their efforts in identifying the place names in this text: in essence they corroborate each other. Feng Cheng-jun [v. 26, 2-3] and Zhang Xuan [v. 9, 26-27] have also done research in this area. V. M. Shtein offers completely different conclusions [v. 10, 59-66, 75-77] based on the mistaken interpretation of *Huangmen* as a place name, which entirely demolishes his argument. V. A. Velgus has summarised this research and thoroughly examined juan 28 of the *Quan Han shu*. With all due respect to the scholars here mentioned, we wish to register disagreement on certain points, specifically on the nature of the mission undertaken at the turn of the 2nd century B.C. and on whether or not any mission took place in the early 1st century A.D. Lack of space, however, obliges us to refer the reader to our arguments on pages 106, 133-34.

part of the island of Hainan.

It is clear that this mission had official sanctions. It was led by officials directly subordinate to the Imperial court and, since the countries visited had been sending gifts to China since the reign of Wu-di, we gather that they had already been included among China's so-called 'tributary' states (for further details see p. 109 above), though the source does not explicitly declare that the undertaking had diplomatic aims.

There certainly was a commercial motivation: the envoys from the *Huangmen* recruited their staff (i.e. did not have automatic jurisdiction over a group of subordinates), took goods and money and set out to acquire what they could overseas. The range of items involved in the exchange is even recorded. But this does not contradict our belief that the mission had diplomatic aims too: at every stage of Chinese contact with overseas countries, trade and diplomacy were almost inextricably linked.

Archaeological finds also point to commercial intercourse between China and the South Seas in the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C., and indicate that countries other than those listed by the *Qian Han shu* were involved. Dutch and Indonesian digs in West Java, East Borneo and South Sumatra have unearthed Chinese ceramics dating from the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. [v. 21, 55]; Chinese pottery of approximately the same period has also been found in Malaya [v. 43, 6].

We have no way of knowing if similar expeditions took place at the turn of the 2nd century B.C. It is, however, sure that Wang Mang's expedition to Southern India in 1-5 A.D. was to pass through the South Seas countries listed in the *Qian Han shu*. After this the Chinese sources make no further reference to Chinese contact with the South Seas for more than a century.

In 132 A.D. an embassy from Dan, a state situated approximately in the centre of Burma, entered China through Rinan—which means that it came by sea [v. 24, juan 6, 2625(4)],<sup>1</sup> as did an embassy from Yetiao (identified by most scholars as Javadvipa), sent by the Javan ruler

<sup>1</sup> Previous embassies from Dan, in 97 and 120 A.D., had come overland via Upper Burma [v. 24, juan 86, 3790(3)].

in the same year [v. 24, juan 6, 2625(4)]. Embassies equipped with interpreters and bearing 'tribute and gifts' came from somewhere beyond Rinan in 173 A.D. [v. 25, 86, 3784(1)]. The source, while omitting to mention where they came from, adds that, due to anti-Chinese rebellions in the northern regions of Vietnam, no more embassies came from the lands 'beyond Rinan' until 183 A.D. [v. 24, juan 86, 3784(1)].

The Imperial court, besides labelling these South Seas embassies 'tributary' missions, also sought support for its unsubstantiated claims to sovereignty over them. In 132 A.D., for example, Javan envoys were given a state seal which 'ratified' their ruler's position in the name of the Chinese Emperor [v. 24, juan 6, 2625(4)]. This diplomatic practice subsequently became widespread.

One may wonder why these countries continued to send embassies knowing that they would be exploited by the Chinese for their own diplomatic ends. The fact was that the large, centralised Han Empire, then already over 300 years old, carried considerable weight in the eyes of states which were just struggling into existence during the 2nd century A.D. Wishing to bolster their position in the international arena, those states would naturally set great store by a liaison with one of the strongest governments in the East at that time. Moreover, the South Seas countries were attracted by the proposition of receiving 'reciprocal gifts' for their 'tribute', of becoming involved in the unequal exchange which, as explained in the previous article was a kind of centralised trade.

An idea of the 'presents' brought by envoys from the South Seas may be gleaned from a list of gifts offered in 166 A.D. by emissaries—or merchants calling themselves emissaries—from the eastern regions of the Roman Empire. Scholars agree that the goods carried by the Roman embassy—ivory, rhino horn and tortoise shell—came from the South Seas [v. 24, juan 88, 3824(3)]. As far as we can judge from the 'gifts' presented to the Dan embassy, China sent precious metals and fabrics in exchange [v. 24, juan 86, 3790(4)].

Private commerce between China and the South Seas continued to develop early in the modern era. The excavations in Java and Malacca mentioned above brought to light

several examples of Chinese ceramics of the 1st to 3rd century A.D.

Indian cultural and political influence made considerable advances in the South Seas from the 2nd century A.D.; a large-scale movement of Indian colonists to that area occurred about that time. Luniya claims that during the 2nd century some 20,000 Indian families settled in Java alone [v. 2, 251].

Simultaneously Buddhism began to penetrate into South-East Asia, taking a firm hold in Burma and north Vietnam during the 1st century and subsequently making inroads in the South Seas.

Fundamental changes took place in China early in the 3rd century. After the fall of the Han Empire in 220 A.D. northern and north-western China suffered centuries of foreign invasion and civil war. The resultant decentralisation and economic decline had least effect on south China, which continued to maintain diplomatic and commercial links with overseas countries. The southern maritime monsoon route through the South Seas to the Indian Ocean became increasingly important in the overall pattern of Chinese foreign relations.

The Chinese sources offer significantly fuller and more specific information on relations with the South Seas from the 3rd and 5th centuries on. As the *Liang shu* notes, the Chinese in the 3rd century had 'details of 100 and several score foreign countries' in the south and south-west [v. 14, juan 54, 8055(4)], though even in the 5th century slightly over ten of them were in direct contact with China [v. 14, juan 54, 8055(4)]. From the 3rd century, Linyi (later known as Champa) and Funan—countries in central and southern Indochina—seemed the most eager to establish active relations with China.

According to the Chinese sources, Champa emerged at the end of the 2nd century A.D.—in the Xianglin sub-district of Rinan district (now Vietnam), an area which had been occupied by the Chinese in 111-110 B.C. [v. 14, juan 54, 8055(4)]—taking advantages of the growing weakness of the Han Empire to assert itself. At the outset it centred on the area where the Vietnamese town of Gue now stands. Champa was inhabited by Chams, an Indonesian-Malaysian people, and Vietnamese, and, as material remains indicate,

was strongly influenced by Indian culture.

The first Cham embassy arrived in China at some time between 220 and 230 A.D. [v. 8, 27]. By 248 A.D. the new state was attacking Chinese garrisons in Vietnam; a great battle took place near Ba Don in that year [v. 8, 27]. Champa continued to provoke confrontations in the Chinese-occupied territories of north Vietnam towards the end of the 3rd century—but saw this as no obstacle to the diplomatic mission she sent to China in 284 A.D. [v. 17, juan 58, 7604(4)].

Shortly after 337 A.D. another Cham embassy arrived; according to the *Jin shu*, it 'handed over a missive and delivered tribute' [v. 27, juan 97, 5497(2)], but in 347 and 348 Champa attacked Rinan again [v. 27, juan 97, 5497(2)-(3)]. In 349 the Chinese governor of Rinan managed to beat off another assault. From the 370s diplomatic intercourse quickened: Ferrand estimates that embassies were sent from Champa to China in 372, 373, 377 and 382 [v. 39, 48].

Sino-Cham relations deteriorated early in the 5th century: the *Jin shu* records annual invasions of Rinan from 405 to 418 A.D. [v. 27, juan 97, 5497(3)]; military confrontations continued up to 446 A.D. [v. 20, juan 97, 7031(2)-(3)], but Champa went on dispatching envoys to China, some with strictly diplomatic ends in view. For example, in 433 ambassadors arrived with lavish gifts and a request from the Cham ruler for jurisdiction over Jiaozhou district (north Vietnam)—but the Chinese government balked at that [v. 20, juan 97, 7031(2)].

The sources for the latter half of the 5th century abound with references to diplomatic contacts with Champa: Ferrand has calculated that 14 Cham missions to China took place during the 5th century [39, 48].

The alternation of war and diplomacy continued during the following century. The Chinese received the Cham embassies and even tried to win over their belligerent neighbours by showing good will: in 526, for instance, the local ruler was awarded a Chinese military title, as was the one who sent envoys in 527 and 528 A.D. [v. 14, juan 54, 8058(1)-(2)]. Yet this did not help to halt the attacks on the Chinese domain in north Vietnam [v. 8, 43].

Reviewing Sino-Cham relations from the 3rd to 6th

centuries, we conclude that in the struggle for Rinan China adopted a largely passive position, making far fewer incursions into Champa than Champa made into Chinese territory. The Chinese expeditions against Champa, though designated 'punitive' in our sources, did not represent an attempt to seize Cham territory. Indeed, for the three centuries just reviewed, China was interested solely in holding her position in Rinan, in which she succeeded.

A second important characteristic of this episode throws light on Chinese foreign relations in general. Though in a state of incessant war with Champa, China did not refuse to accept her diplomatic missions and even recorded them as 'tributary' embassies. Champa certainly did not interpret her diplomatic intercourse with China as declaration of submission. Rulers who accepted military titles from a country with which they were at war continued that war.

Over the same period—the 3rd to 6th centuries A.D.—China's relationship with Funan, the other important state in Indochina at that time, was rather less antagonistic. Funan arose at the dawn of the modern era, was inhabited by Proto-Indonesian tribes and centred on the Mekong delta, though its influence extended to the area around Phang Rang on the south-east coast. Chinese scholars hold that China and Funan first made contact along the Mekong [v. 33, 79]; by the 3rd century A.D., however, the sea was the major link between them. Early Chinese sources describe Funan's towns, flourishing trade network, high level of seamanship, and established literary tradition, and note that it was under Indian cultural influence.

Sun Quan, the military luminary and founder of the Kingdom of Wu (one of the Three Kingdoms of the Period 220-280 A.D.), appointed Zhu Ying and Kang Tai to head the first Chinese embassy to Funan, at some time around 226/231, or, in another variant, 245/250 A.D. [v. 14, juan 54, 8055(4)].<sup>1</sup>

Discussing the motives behind this mission, Ferrand holds that it was encouraged by Funan embassy to China in

<sup>1</sup> The sources are so vague that it is impossible to pinpoint the date—though if 245/250 is accepted as more likely, we must assume that another Chinese embassy was sent to the South Seas between 226 and 231.

225 A.D. [v. 39, 41] and the *San Guo zhi* (Description of the Three Kingdoms) mentions that an embassy from Funan arrived alongside those from Champa and the country of Tangming in connection with the events of 226 to 231 [v. 26, 13]. Be this as it may, Sun Quan must have been looking for support from the south in his conflict with the northern Kingdom of Wei. Wu, with its capital at Jianye (now Nanjing), had extended its influence southwards, as far as Rinan, and would therefore naturally seek contact with the countries of the South Seas, probably looking for allies among them.

Zhu Ying and Kang Tai compiled the first fully reliable description of the South Seas: *Funan yi wu zhi* (Zhu Ying's *Description of the Marvels of Funan*) and *Wu shi wai guo zhuan* (Kang Tai's *Description of Foreign Parts in the Time of the Kingdom of Wu*). Only fragments of Kang Tai's work have survived, in numerous portrayals of foreign countries found in historical and geographical studies; it covered at least 12 countries, from Champa to Ceylon [v. 26, 16]. Zhu Ying's account is entirely lost. Thanks to these two Wu ambassadors, Chinese knowledge of the South Seas became considerably wider and more accurate.

Relations between China and Funan were both diplomatic and commercial, though the sources refer primarily to diplomatic activity, such as the Funan embassy which arrived in 243 A.D. [v. 26, 13]. The *Jin shu* maintains that diplomatic activity heightened in the latter half of the 3rd century A.D. Ferrand holds that there were Funan embassies to China in 268, 285, 286 and 287 [v. 39, 47], which, as D. G. E. Hall notes, did not prevent Funan from signing a military pact with Champa around 270 A.D., and entering the conflict in Rinan [v. 8, 39]. The confrontation between Funan and China was, however, brief. In the 430s, when Champa again invited Funan to join an expedition against China, she met a refusal [v. 20, juan 97, 7031(2)].

In the 4th and early 5th centuries relations between China and Funan were broken off, with the sole exception of a Funan embassy in 357 A.D. [v. 14, juan 54, 8060(1)]. The *Nan qi shu* asserts that Champa's persistent assaults on Jiaozhou district made it impossible for Funan to maintain her links with China [v. 17, juan 58, 7608(1)]—though there may, of course, have been other causes.

Contact, revived in the 430s by a series of embassies from Funan [v. 20, juan 97, 7032(3)], was continued in the mid-fifth century [v. 17, juan 58, 7606(1)] and quickened in the early 6th century: missions were sent from Funan in 503, 511, 514, 517, 519, 520, 529, 535 and 539 A.D. [v. 14, juan 54, 8060(2)-(3)]. In response to the embassy of 539, the Emperor dispatched an envoy to Funan with orders to study Buddhist relics there [v. 14, juan 54, 8060(3)-(4)]. In the mid-sixth century Funan was overrun by the Khmer Kingdom of Zhenla (the name is transcribed thus in the Chinese sources), which had previously been limited to the north of what is now Kampuchea and the south of Laos. The conquest of Funan, which marked the birth of Kampuchea as we know it today, was evidently a gradual process, as her embassies appeared in China in 559, 572 and 588 [v. 39, 47]—indeed, the *Xin Tang shu* records the arrival of embassies from Funan up to the mid-seventh century [v. 18, juan 222(2), 16984(4)].

Our information on links between China and other South-East Asian countries during the 3rd to 6th centuries is exceedingly scanty, though we know that in the 5th century diplomatic relations were established between China and some countries of the Malaccan peninsula. These were known in Chinese annals as Panpan, Dandan and Languaxiu [v. 31, 58; 9, 39].

The first envoys came from the Malaccan state of Panpan in 424/453, 454/456 and 457/464 [v. 14, juan 54, 8062(4)] and an embassy in 527 brought a document overflowing with praise for the Liang Emperor from his 'servant' (*chen*), the ruler of Panpan [v. 14, juan 54, 8062(4)]. Another embassy arrived in the same year but the next followed after a five-year pause, in 532 A.D. [v. 14, juan 54, 8063(1)].

The Chinese annals of 528 mention envoys from Dandan, [v. 14, juan 54, 8063(1)], and the *Liang shu* gives the text of their address to the Emperor, which is considerably more restrained than the letter from Panpan in its praise for the Imperial overlord and speaks mostly of Buddhist monks. The next Dandan embassy came in 535 A.D. [v. 14, juan 54, 8063(2)].

The *Liang shu* mentions only one embassy from Languaxiu, the third Malaccan state to establish contact with



China. It came to court in 515, bringing a letter that was as fulsome in its praise as the Panpan missive would later be [v. 14, juan 54, 8064(2)].

The Chinese sources mention no contact with Java between the embassy of 132 A.D. discussed above and the 5th century, though Kang Tai did refer to Zhubo (Java) and the island of Mawu (Bali) in the *Wu shi wai guo zhuan*. We have no way of knowing, however, whether his data was gathered first-hand, on travels beyond Funan, or was gleaned merely from hearsay.

The rulers of southern China and the Javan state of Kalinga (Heluodan in Chinese transcription) were in diplomatic contact in the 5th century: the *Song shu* records embassies from Java in 430, 433, 436 and 452 and mentions further official contacts between 436 and 452 A.D. Letters sent in 433 and 436, quoted in the *Song shu*, shower the Emperor with praise and speak of sacred Buddhist relics [v. 20, juan 97, 7033(3)-(4), 7034(1)-(3)]. China reciprocated in 449 A.D. with an Imperial eulogy for the ruler of Kalinga [v. 20, juan 97, 7034(3)].

The *Song shu* also contains references to Heluotuo, a country somewhere in the south-west of the South Seas [v. 20, juan 97, 7032(2)], and to Bohuang and Boda, which lay close to Kalinga [v. 20, juan 97, 7034(3)-(4)]. Without expending much effort of pinpointing the location of these states, we can be sure that they were not far from Java within the Indonesian archipelago. From about 425 to 450 A.D. they all entered into official relations with the rulers of southern China by means of envoys and written messages. Like the ruler of Kalinga, the rulers of Bohuang and Boda received flattering missives from the Imperial court and were awarded the title of *wang* [v. 20, juan 97, 7034(3)-(4)].

The first contacts between the rulers of southern China and the states of Sumatra are recorded in the mid-fifth century. The relations with Gangtuoli<sup>1</sup> are covered in greater detail.

According to the *Liang shu*, the first Gangtuoli embassy

<sup>1</sup> The *Liang shu* tells us only that Gangtuoli was a South Seas island state. Several scholars, however, aver that it was on the island of Sumatra [v. 8, 45].

came to China at some time between 454 and 465 [v. 14, juan 54, 8063(2)]; the *Song shu* attributes it precisely to 455 A.D. [v. 20, juan 97, 7036(3)]. Further embassies followed in 502, 518 and 520 A.D. [v. 14, juan 54, 8063(2)-(3), 8064(1)]. Buddhism played a large role in the relationship between the two countries, as we see from a letter received at the Chinese court in 502 A.D. and the fact that one of the Gangtuoli ambassadors was an Indian called Rudra—a common name among Hindu Buddhists [v. 8, 45].

The *Song shu* also speaks of envoys from Sumali in 441 A.D. and from Boli in 473 [v. 14, juan 97, 7036(3)], which Zhang Xing-lang identifies as Samarlangka and Perlak, both in northern Sumatra [v. 30, 54]. The *Liang shu* gives a detailed description of Perlak, transcribing the name in different characters with the same sound, and mentions two embassies from that country, in 517 and 522 A.D. [v. 14, juan 54, 8065(1)-(2)].

We mentioned above that from the 5th century on the Chinese sources keep a record of official missives sent by countries of the South Seas to the Chinese court; some are quoted at length. They would be of little interest to us, were it not for the fact that the translated texts were heavily distorted.

All these letters, as cited by Chinese sources, bristle with panegyrics to the Emperor; the rulers who sent them abase themselves as 'servants' of the Imperial overlord: this in itself, however, is no proof of falsification. In fact, the Chinese diplomatic translators give themselves away in two other respects.

Firstly, the translated texts are full of terms and expressions current in Chinese official correspondence: magnification of the Chinese Emperor as the 'all-wise ruler', praise for his efforts to 'imitate the ancient monarchs in his government', references to his 'heavenly goodness, humanness and virtue' and so on [v. 14, juan 54, 8062(4); 20, juan 97, 7033(3)-(4)], and even more typical formulae such as 'the four seas'—the conventional Chinese way of dividing up the earth—and 'the 10,000 (the Chinese expression of plurality—*auth.*) countries that turn their hearts to China' [20, juan 97, 7033(3)-(4); 17, juan 58, 7606(2)].

Secondly, it is obviously significant that letters arriving from different countries at different times are similar

in several respects. For example, an address from Kalinga received in 433 A.D. echoes almost exactly one received from Gangtuoli in 518 [v. 20, juan 97, 7033(3)-(4); 14, juan 54, 8063(3)-8064(1)]; a letter from Langyaxiu dated 515 A.D. is nothing more than a shortened version of one sent from Kalinga in 436 [v. 20, juan 97, 7033(4)-7035(3); 14, juan 54, 8064(2)-(3)].

These textual parallels are evidence not only of alterations made by the translators but also of the emergence in fifth- and sixth-century China of a set of conventional ways of handling documents such as these—conventions which were not, however, permanently fixed. Comparing the letters of 433 and 518 mentioned above, we see that they are identical at the outset, diverge slightly and insignificantly in the middle and differ completely at the end. The 518 variant is much shorter than its prototype, which ends in a long catalogue of mystical wonders [v. 20, juan 97, 7033(3)-(4); 14, juan 54, 8063(3)-8064(1)].

The distortions in the letters were determined by the aims of the Chinese diplomatic translators, namely to underline the sovereignty of the Chinese court and the 'submission' of the foreign rulers—factors which would, in the eyes of the Chinese ruling elite, help strengthen Imperial power at home and increase the Emperor's prestige abroad. This is why the opening passages of the letters, which addressed the Emperor directly, suffered most in translation. The body of the message was evidently rendered more or less accurately, though also in a sinified form, since it usually spoke of gifts offered to the Chinese court or contained requests, or information about Buddhist holy places. This well suited the Chinese diplomats, for it showed that the foreign rulers wished to please the Emperor. Hence, while the falsification of the opening passages—specifically designed to humble the writer and exalt the recipient—is beyond doubt, the extent of distortion in the main part of the letters still awaits thorough investigation.<sup>1</sup>

Subsequently a letter was invariably demanded of all

<sup>1</sup> The issue is obviously complicated by the fact that we do not possess the original texts. A comparative study of 18th-century documents has been undertaken by the Chinese scholars Yao Nan and Xu Yu [v. 38, 68-13].

envoys seeking an official audience and these missives became a fundamental factor in Chinese foreign relations.

Another basic feature of Chinese diplomacy—one which played a significant role in Chinese relations with the South Seas from the 5th/6th centuries—was the practice of giving foreign rulers the title of *wang*. As noted above, the rulers of Bohuang and Boda became *wangs*, and an Imperial rescript expressing pleasure at the arrival of an embassy from Funan in 503 A.D. named the local ruler 'commander of the Dominion of the South and *wang* of Funan' [14, juan 54, 8060(2)]. Titles such as 'commander of the Dominion of the South' had been awarded previously to foreign rulers, but the granting of the title of *wang*—a governor one rank below the Emperor himself—was a new departure. It was not merely an honorary title, since it implied the formal ratification of a ruler's power in a given country. The emergence of this procedure, which later became a pivotal feature of Chinese diplomacy, marks a stage in the development of diplomatic practice and indicates the way things would go in the future. The Imperial court's arrogation of the right to 'ratify' the position of foreign rulers through the award of an Imperial title is an important phase in the evolution of the claim that the Emperor's power was supreme and omnipresent.

We also find that the replies sent out by the Imperial court are highly informative. According to established procedure, they were not an obligatory aspect of official relations and were thus a rare and special mark of favour. The letter sent to Java in 449 A.D. is a good illustration: it begins with praise for 'paying tribute to China' but ends with a warning to 'eternally observe the duties (of a subject court)' [20, juan 97, 7034(3)]; in taking this tone the Imperial missives were responding exactly to the tenor of the falsified letters from abroad.

Commerce between China and the South Seas in the 3rd to 6th centuries took a dual form: a centralised exchange of 'tribute' and 'gifts' and a simultaneous development of private trade. Some foreign rulers gave their envoys large batches of goods to sell [17, juan 58, 7606(1)]: in distinction to the 'tribute proper', the trade goods would be exchanged on the basis of equivalent value in a regular commercial transaction. The Malaccan state of Pan-

pan in 527 A.D., for example, sent 'tribute' in the form of ivory artefacts and 'gifts' of eaglewood, sandalwood and various kinds of 'aromatic' woods [14, juan 54, 8063(1)].

Local merchants were familiar with the southern sea route at this time. Fa Xian returned home from his tour of the South Seas on merchant vessels. At that time Guangzhou was a vital link in China's maritime trade: officials were employed there as early as the 5th and 6th centuries to deal exclusively with foreign ships which put into the port [v. 25, 242-243]. And in the 4th to 6th centuries, when constant war devastated the north of China and sapped its economy, the economic, political and commercial weight of the south—below the Yangtse River—increased tremendously. This put a new emphasis on the southern maritime trade routes.

Private merchant trade between China and South-East Asia was bilateral in the 3rd to 6th centuries: the *Liang shu*, for example, notes that Chinese merchants went to Linyi [v. 14, juan 54, 8056(2)]. We do not know which Chinese goods were sold in South and South-East Asia during this period, although in the latter half of the 3rd century the 'tribute' from the south consisted mainly of gold, precious stones, perfumed woods and medicines [13, juan 89, 48a]. But as diplomatic and cultural contacts between China, India and South-East Asia evolved in the 4th to 6th centuries, the range of goods would certainly expand. The *Song shu* commented on the importance of the southern routes: 'The ships sail one after another, the traders and envoys travel from one land to the next' [20, juan 97, 7045(2)].

The dawn of the 7th century A.D. marks the beginning of a new phase in Chinese relations with South-East Asia, prompted by the rise of a centralised Chinese Empire at the close of the 6th-century, which facilitated the development of foreign relations and foreign trade. During the 7th and 8th centuries substantial political changes also occurred in the South Seas. The Sumatran Empire of Sri Vijaya emerged and extended its influence over many small neighbouring islands and part of the Malaccan peninsula during the 7th century. The Javan state of Mataram gradually asserted its dominance over most of the island during the 8th century. After the fall of Funan, the Kingdom of Zhenla laid the foundations of modern Kampuchea.

Numerous sinologists have noted the fundamental changes in the relations between the states of East Asia at this time. Professor Yamamoto, for instance, speaks of the development of intimate international ties in the area from the 7th century on [v. 6, 66]. The English scholar, Victor Purcell, is of a similar opinion, and holds that, though Chinese diplomacy began to operate at an early stage and had a palpable effect in the 5th and 6th centuries, it is not until the 8th century that the 'era' of 'tributary missions'<sup>1</sup> really dawns [42, 30].

In sum, international relations in the Far East altered radically in the 7th and 8th centuries, a natural development in an age which witnessed the sudden rise of so many states.

Almost immediately after the centralised Sui Empire (581-616 A.D.) emerged, China began to turn her attention southwards. Renewed conflict over northern Vietnam with Champa enabled China to stabilise her position there during the 590s. Cham troops were sent to support an anti-Chinese rebellion in northern Vietnam, China sent in 604-605 A.D. a large sea-borne force, who captured the Cham capital. But once again China proved too weak to hold the country and the Imperial army shortly withdrew.

This expedition was part of a pattern of increased Imperial activity abroad from the 7th century on. Early in the century a Chinese naval expedition was sent to Taiwan, though the major focus of attention was not the south but the north-east, and specifically Korea, which suffered several Imperial invasions around this period. In the south the Chinese government preferred diplomacy to military coercion: for example, a mission was sent to Chita—which lay, apparently, in the central or southern part of Malacca—in 607-610 A.D., under the leadership of Chang Jun and his close collaborator Wang Jun-zheng. The aim was evidently to sound out the position in the South Seas and initiate relations between the rulers there and the new Imperial dynasty, and in this respect it is interesting that Chang Jun's itinerary took in several states on the coast of Indochina and the Gulf of Siam.

<sup>1</sup> An expression not to be taken at face value, of course. The Chinese used the term 'tributary' for reasons discussed above, though what was actually taking place was diplomatic and cultural intercourse.

The embassy carried lavish gifts for the ruler of Chita, notably 5,000 pieces of cloth<sup>1</sup> [12, juan 95, 13826(2)], which indicates that another of its prime aims was to stimulate official trade between China and the South Seas.

Chang Jun and Wang Jun-zheng were given a magnificent reception in Chita—the fleet was sent out to greet them and they were met with music and gifts. Ceremonial audiences with the local ruler were accompanied with banquets and more presentations. The embassy returned home bearing Chita's 'tribute'. The court, pleased with the outcome of the mission, rewarded Chang Jun and his companions generously with decorations and gifts. Unfortunately Chang Jun and Wang Jun-zheng's description of the journey has not survived, though the *Sui shu* contains excerpts from it.

Zhang Xuan points out that at the turn of the 6th century A.D. China was in official contact with some dozen countries in the South Seas, though he admits that the documentary evidence does not confirm this [9, 39]. Moreover, the *Sui shu* describes only four southern lands: Champa, Chita, Zhenla and Boli.

Renewed diplomatic relations between China and Champa date from the end of the campaign of 604-605 A.D. The first Tang Emperor sent a gift of cloth to the ruler of Champa in 618, apparently as an invitation to establish peaceful relations. Champa responded by dispatching emissaries in 623, 625, 627, 630 and 631; subsequently, the *Jui Tang shu* asserts, missions from Champa were a regular feature of court life [v. 28, juan 197, 15372(2)].

In the mid-seventh century China showed its favour to Champa, when the Emperor sent his condolences on the death of a local ruler [27, juan 197, 15372(2)], and during the following century Cham embassies were sent to China an average of once every three years [v. 18, juan 222(3), 16983(2)].

A lull in the battle for Vietnam did much to encourage these regular contacts, but after a mission sent from Champa at some point between 756 and 758 A.D. [v. 18, juan 222(3), 16983(2)], official intercourse began to slacken off.

<sup>1</sup> The length of a 'piece' of cloth was never fixed.

Early in the 9th century clashes between the Chams and the Chinese garrisons in Annam became more frequent; the Kampucheans entered the conflict too. In the period between 806 and 820, Zhang Zhou, commander of the Chinese forces in Annam, led a successful campaign against Champa, after which the Chinese tried to define the Sino-Cham frontier precisely, setting up copper posts at intervals along it [v. 13, juan 89, 48b]. This was not the first Chinese attempt to secure the occupied territories in Vietnam: the first mention of an identical undertaking relates to the period between 25 and 57 A.D. [v. 13, juan 89, 48a].

Some of the minor states close to Champa also sent emissaries to China in the early 7th century [v. 18, juan 222(3), 16983(3)].

Shortly after the Tang dynasty had established itself in China, the ruler of Zhenla received a Chinese calendar [v. 18, juan 222(3), 16984(1)], an indication that his official documents should be dated according to Chinese conventions, by the period and year of the current Emperor's reign. The foreign ruler who used this system placed himself, in the eyes of the Chinese ruling elite, in a position of vassal dependence. But it should be noted that the rulers of the South Seas rejected the Imperial calendrical system; official papers from overseas were 'correctly' dated by the Chinese translators.

The Chinese mission which brought the calendars was correctly interpreted in Zhenla as an invitation to enter into official relations. The first Zhenlan embassies entered China in 623 and 628 A.D.; regular contact was kept up until the mid-eighth century [v. 28, juan 197, 15372(4)]. The *Xin Tang shu* states that Zhenlan ambassadors came once every four years [v. 18, juan 222(3), 16984(1)]. Though Zhenla split in the early 8th century—into a northern 'Land Zhenla' and southern 'Water Zhenla'—the ambassadors kept on arriving, largely from the northern sector. The sole southern embassy is recorded at some time between 806 and 820 A.D. [v. 18, juan 222(3), 16984(4)].

Envoys came from Sri Vijaya between 670 and 741 A.D. [v. 18, juan 222(3), 16985(1)]; the ruler's son, on his one visit, was feted at a magnificent reception where elevated titles were handed out to him and fine gifts presented [v. 18, juan 222(3), 16985(1)].



Java opened official relations with China by sending an embassy in 640 [v. 28, juan 197, 15373(1)]. Between 760 and 762 a high-ranking Arab came from Java entrusted to seek the moral support of the Empire in the Javan succession crisis [v. 18, juan 222(3), 16984(2)-(3)]. Embassies from Java came to China up to the latter half of the 9th century, though not very often [v. 18, juan 222(3), 16984(3); 28, juan 197, 15373(1)].

Among the smaller South Seas states which occasionally sent emissaries to China in the first half of the 7th century, we should mention Perlak and Panpan, which apparently fell under the domination of Sri Vijaya in the mid-seventh century, for no further embassies are recorded after that time.

In general, diplomatic activity between China and South-East Asia slowed down around the turn of the 8th century A.D. The *Xin Tang shu* tells us that the last Cham envoys visited China in 806 [v. 18, juan 222(3), 16983(3)], and the last embassy from Zhenla is recorded in 813 [v. 28, juan 197, 15372(4)]. Descriptions of missions from the other South-East Asian states cease even earlier than this, with the single exception of Java. We interpret this diplomatic retrenchment as evidence of the social and political crisis of the Tang Empire.

But the lull in diplomatic exchanges had little effect on the development of commercial and cultural intercourse between China and the South Seas throughout the 7th to 9th centuries.

Muslim traders were more active along the southern commercial routes than their Chinese counterparts, though the Chinese merchants also travelled far from home in those days, thanks largely to advances made in Chinese ship-building in the 7th to 9th centuries. At the turn of the 6th century Zu Zhong-zhi had discovered new techniques for the construction of deep-sea craft, notably involving use of the wheel; his pioneering efforts were continued some time later by Li Gao [v. 3, 255-256]. Thus, the Chinese ships of the 7th to 9th centuries were both large and sturdy: some carried up to 700 people and a large amount of cargo. From the end of the 9th century even Arab merchants and sea-travellers began to use Chinese vessels [v. 9, 49].

Jia Dan's description of the South Seas route, at the

end of the 8th century, shows that it began on the south China seaboard, ran along the south-east coast of Indochina (Champa), passed via Poulo Condore and the Malaccan peninsula to south-east Sumatra (Sri Vijaya) and Java, then proceeded through the Malacca straits, along the coast of Sumatra and finally emerged into the Indian ocean [v. 9, 43-44].

Changes made in the Chinese commercial administration bear witness to the expansion of Chinese trade with South-East Asia, India and the Middle East in the 7th to 9th centuries. At the turn of the 6th century an official—*jiao shi lan*—had been appointed to keep an eye on trade in Guangzhou [v. 29, 4]. From the second decade of the 8th century a supervisor of merchant vessels using the southern routes—*shi bo shi*—was also stationed in Guangzhou. Later sources inform us that, after 716 A.D. an official in charge of friendly contacts—*jie hao shi*—was assigned to Guangzhou too. He had to report to the Emperor on the foreign ships in the port [v. 13, juan 89, 48b]; perhaps his task was to determine if the foreign visitors had official business in China (in which case they should appear at court) or if their ends were purely commercial. Later the maritime trade through Guangzhou was further regulated.

Fujita holds that all these measures were evidence of a government attempt to take control of the substantial profits brought in by maritime trade along the southern routes [v. 25, 244], a view which is supported by the Chinese sources. After describing one of the Guangzhou appointments, for instance, one author continues: 'All the southern and eastern foreigners who delivered tribute and traded [in Guangzhou] were ordered to allot a small part of their profit to the treasury' [13, juan 89, 48a].

The state buying monopoly on certain categories of overseas goods helped swell the treasury too. During this period the monopoly covered all valuables and curios, which included gold, pearls, mother-of-pearl, tortoise shell, ivory and rhino horn [v. 25, 249]—indirect proof that the full range of items involved in Chinese trade with the countries of the South Seas and Indian Ocean was considerably wider. The Chinese government, however, was merely interested in making a profit from maritime trade and took no deliberate steps to extend it.

The following case illustrates the official attitude. An Imam from Persia in the first half of the 8th century brought a written description of the riches of the South Seas which promised the treasury a fine profit if a fleet of Chinese ships were sent out in that direction. The Emperor ordered Yang Fan-cheng, a mandarin assigned to the capital, to lead such an expedition in company with the Imam, but, being less than enthusiastic about the idea, the official produced a host of 'weighty' arguments against it and the Emperor rescinded his order [v. 13, juan 89, 48b].

Summing up the effects of the southern maritime trade in the 7th to 9th centuries, Chinese historians conclude that it was highly beneficial to the Chinese economy [23, 10; 3, 217].

For China this was a period of economic progress, of the emergence and stabilisation of the feudal state, of a cultural upsurge. Independent cultures were simultaneously developing in the South Seas under heavy Indian influence from around the turn of the modern era—though this did not hamper cultural intercourse between China and her southern neighbours.

Spread of Buddhism was a source of mutual interest. Entering the South Seas at the dawn of the modern era, it made particularly good progress under the auspices of Sri Vijaya (7th to 14th centuries). Many Chinese pilgrims travelled to or from India via the South Seas. Fa Xian, for example, ended his journey of 399 to 415 A.D. with five months in Java and Yi Jing, who visited Sumatra and other parts of the South Seas at the end of the 7th century, named 37 Chinese pilgrims who had been in the area in the latter half of the 7th century [v. 5, 106]. When 56 of his pupils later set out on pilgrimages, many of them travelled by sea [v. 7, 49]. The pilgrims' travelogues, notably those by Fa Xian and Yi Jing, increased Chinese knowledge about the lands to the south. They were all first-hand accounts: one of Yi Jing's works, in fact, was written while he was actually in Sri Vijaya and drew on local material.

Little research has been done on mutual cultural influence. We can only surmise that the production of paper, silk and ceramics in the South Seas bears the imprint of Chinese methods. Some scholars have speculated on the impact that music from the South Seas had on Chinese musicians

[v. 22, 24]. But it is practically impossible to form a coherent picture of cultural intercourse from the isolated scraps of information available.

When the Tang Empire collapsed in the early 10th century, south China regained its political and economic predominance, and, with the way to the West along the great silk route again barred, the southern seaways became a vital link between China and the outside world. However, the Song dynasty (960-1279) was obliged to concentrate on the threat from the north and north-west and did not therefore nurture any far-reaching political designs in the South Seas. Even established diplomatic channels were exploited intensively only at the close of the 10th century and at times during the 11th century, and Chinese envoys became an increasingly rare sight overseas. The Song court preferred to satisfy its diplomatic needs through the foreign emissaries sent to China.

The political map of South-East Asia changed substantially during the 10th to 13th centuries. The centralised state of Pagan arose in Lower Burma around the mid-eleventh century, only to be destroyed in the late 13th century by the Mongols. The Tai tribes emigrated southwards along the Menam (Chao Phraya) and concentrated around the town of Sukothai. In the mid-tenth century Angkor became the capital of the relatively powerful state of Kambujadesha (Kampuchea), and retained this position for nearly 500 years. Also in the 10th century the Vietnamese freed themselves from Chinese occupation and formed the state of Dai Viet in northern Vietnam. Towards the end of the century this new state entered a protracted struggle with Champa for control of the central areas of present-day Vietnam.

The Empire of Sri Vijaya played a predominant role in Indonesia during the period under consideration, though its hold over Java began to slacken from the 10th century. Still strong enough to beat off attacks from Chola in the 11th century, it waned steadily until at the closing of the 13th century Sumatra had split into several independent principalities, the most noteworthy of which was Melayu. As Sri Vijaya declined, the states of Java came into the ascendent: from the latter half of the 10th century the cultural and political focus of the island shifted to the

Brantas valley (in East Java), where there were two states of Djangala and Kediri until the early 12th century. Kediri later gained overall control, but was eclipsed in the early 13th century by the new centralised state of Syngosari.

Lack of space precludes a more detailed discussion of the political situation in the South Seas.

Though the Song dynasty showed scant interest in diplomatic contact with the South Seas, those countries, for their part, were eager to maintain official links with China, one of the most powerful states of the Far East and a worthwhile trading partner. Several envoys came from the south in pursuit of specific diplomatic ends.

Sri Vijaya was particularly active: in the 960s and 980s her embassies arrived almost annually [v. 19, juan 489, 24134(2)-(4)]. One ambassador, on his way home in 992 A.D., hearing of Javan attack on his country, turned round and, on his own initiative, persuaded the Chinese court to extend its protection to Sri Vijaya [v. 19, juan 489, 24134(4)]. The embassies continued to arrive throughout the 11th century, but much less frequently; the *Song shu* records only two missions during the entire 12th century—in 1156 and 1178 [v. 19, juan 489, 24135(3)].

Though Cham embassies were sent to China from the late 10th century, the most intensive diplomatic activity took place during the 11th century. Contact was kept up in the 12th century. The rulers of Champa tried to exploit their relationship with China for their own political benefit: in 980 and 1062 Champa appealed to the Imperial court for military aid against Dai Viet [v. 8, 142-143, 145; 19, juan 489, 24132(3)], but China was not then strong enough to become involved in the conflict. The Cham ruling house also tried to profit from the Chinese practice of awarding the title of *wang* to foreign sovereigns, by using it to resolve succession problems.

An embassy from the states of Java came to China in 992 [18, juan 489, 24136(2)], but later diplomatic activity was unenthusiastic, though Sino-Javan trade expanded.

Relations between Song China and Kambujadesha did not revive until 1116 [v. 19, juan 489, 24133(3)]. The rulers in Angkor received the title of *wang*, and regular contact continued into the 13th century [v. 19, juan 489, 24133(4)].

The first mission from Pagan, in 1106, was accorded a welcome as grand as that given to Arab and Vietnamese embassies [v. 19, juan 489, 24133(4)-24134(1)], and, though the *Song shu* records no further information on the official contact between China and Lower Burma, it continued according to some data until the end of the 12th century [33, 58].

Towards the end of the 12th century, China's interest in the diplomatic aspect of inter-governmental relations with this part of the world began to flag, although in word the 'delivery of tribute' was still considered highly important. We note, for instance, the Emperor's comment on the arrival of a 'tributary' embassy from Sri Vijaya in 1156: 'When people from distant lands arrive in China, we are delighted by [the] sincerity [of their attitude to us] and not by the profit to be made from the local goods [they bring]' [19, juan 489, 24135(3)]—a frank admission that this commercial exchange was profitable for the court.

It was not long before this aspect began to overshadow the more conventional elements of diplomatic intercourse. A vivid illustration is the 'welcome' given to an embassy from Sri Vijaya in 1178: on receiving the report of its arrival, the Emperor sent special orders directing the local authorities not to conduct the envoys to the capital for a royal audience but to house them in Quanzhou [v. 18, juan 489, 24135(3)], which effectively nullified the political impact of the mission. The government's motives become clear, however, when it is realised that Quanzhou ranked with Guangzhou as a commercial centre in the 11th to 13th centuries. There the envoys would be able to get on with their trading activities to mutual satisfaction.

As far as we can judge from the sources, the system of 'foreign tribute' and 'Imperial presentations' had developed into an extensive commercial operation involving a wide range of goods by the turn of the 10th century. By way of example, we list the inventory of the Cham embassy of 1018: 72 elephant tusks, 86 rhino horns, 1,000 *jin* of tortoise shell, 50 *jin* of aromatic wood, 80 *jin* of clove-tree flowers, 65 *jin* of nutmegs, 100 *jin* of eaglewood, 200 *jin* of jianxiang medicine, 68 *jin* of jian medicine, 100 *jin* of fennel and 1,500 *jin* of betel nuts. In return the Cham ruler received 4,700 *liang* of silver (1 *liang* was 37 grams), weapons

and saddles [v. 19, juan 489, 24132(1)].

Our sources for the 11th to 13th centuries abound with similar reports and detailed lists of the goods which changed hands as 'tribute' and 'presentations'. At times the court even paid in cash rather than with 'compensatory presentations' and although the exchange was never more than approximately equivalent, the introduction of money brought these 'tributary' transactions closer to normal commercial operations. The Emperor ordered that the embassy from Sri Vijaya (1156) be given the 'cash value' of their 'tribute' [v. 19, juan 489, 24135(3)]: the terms used by *Song shi* speak for themselves.

Private maritime trade also flourished in the 10th to 13th centuries, though at times it is hard to draw the line between private transactions and the official exchange described above: merchant ships arrived alongside diplomatic missions, foreign traders claimed to be emissaries in order to gain access to the capital and the emissaries themselves trade as private individuals. In addition, both 'tributary' missions and merchants—foreign and Chinese—came under the jurisdiction of the directorates of merchant vessels, the *shibosi*.<sup>1</sup> The first of these was opened in Guangzhou in 971 A.D., when the fall of the Southern Han allowed the Song dynasty to take control of what is now Guangdong province. In the late 10th to 12th centuries similar offices began to function throughout south-east China, in Hangzhou, Ningbo, Quanzhou and elsewhere [v. 25, 253-288; 9, 52-53]. They had branches known as *shibowu* and *shibochang*.

The *shibosi* had both diplomatic and commercial responsibilities. Their diplomatic functions consisted in meeting incoming envoys, arranging their accommodation, supporting them until the Imperial response to the report on their arrival was received, dispatching them to the capital and checking their credentials. An Imperial rescript of 1157 warned the *shibosi* to look out for merchants passing themselves off as tribute-bearing envoys, which they did for the simple reason that all the goods brought by official emissaries commanded prices some 20 per cent higher than the normal market value [13, juan 89, 48b].

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed account of the emergence of the *shibosi* and their functions in the 10th to 13th centuries, see 25, 239-342.

The commercial aspect of the *shibosi*'s duties included receiving the 'tribute' and sending it to the capital, and distributing the 'reciprocal gifts'. They also checked all ships which put in to Chinese ports, kept a record of imported cargo, levied the taxes on commercial transactions, delivered the tax receipts to the capital, enforced the embargo on trade in monopoly goods, and acted as government agents in the compulsory purchase of wares from abroad at below-market prices. They also issued permits enabling Chinese ships to put to sea and allowing merchants to sell what they had imported.

Permits of this kind—issued previously by the local authorities and later by the *shibosi*—are first mentioned in an Imperial decree of 889 A.D. [v. 25, 314]. The merchants had to present all their goods for inspection, state where they were to be sold, give an approximate date of return and pay duty. On their return the cargo was again examined, to check that no monopoly was being violated; duty was then levied and a document issued permitting the sale of the imported commodities. The aim was to control private Chinese maritime trade and ensure that it made its due contribution to the treasury—not to hamper it. In fact, private maritime trade blossomed in the 10th to 13th centuries as never before.<sup>1</sup>

From the early 12th century foreign merchants were given written permission to trade inside the country, after the *shibosi* had ascertained that they were carrying no monopoly commodities. The Chinese authorities took responsibility for the foreign vessels while their owners were conducting their business in other parts of the country [v. 13, juan 89, 48b].

The wares brought from the South Seas in the 10th to 13th centuries were tremendously varied: a contemporary source comments that 'the foreigners bring ... rhinoceroses,

<sup>1</sup> We have emphasised this point in order to counterbalance two mistaken opinions: that all foreign trade in medieval China was part of the 'tribute' system; and that Chinese foreign trade developed exclusively thanks to the efforts of foreign merchants operating in China. Chinese maritime foreign trade embraced the activities of foreign traders on the Chinese seaboard and of Chinese traders abroad. The extant sources do not, however, enable us to determine which of the two sides gained most from their activities.



elephants, coral, amber, strings of pearls, damask steel, alligator hide, tortoise shell, agate, a precious stone called "tridahna", crystal, foreign fabrics, black pine, sapan-wood, black pepper, perfumes, medicines and other goods' [v. 13, juan 89, 48b]. This list is far from exhaustive: Zhao Ru-gua's *Description of All Foreigners* (circa 1225) mentions 54 types of goods most of which found their way to China from overseas.

Chinese exports were equally diverse. Zhou Da-guan, visiting Kampuchea in the late 13th century, noted that, of the Chinese goods in demand there, gold and silver were foremost, followed by 'yellow, red, blue, white and black fine silk, and also tin and lead alloy from Zhengzhou, Wenzhou lacquered ware, blue porcelain from Quanzhou, mercury, cinnabar, paper, sulphur, saltpetre, sandalwood, cow parsley, musk, linen, canvas cloth, umbrellas, iron cooking pots, copperware, water pearls, tung-oil, winnowing fans, combs, needles and other commodities' [33, 82].

The range of imports widened and the turnover mounted at such a rate that the Chinese government was forced to delimit its official purchases. Late in the 10th century, mandarins in Guangdong had suggested that imports be categorised as 'fine' or 'coarse': the state would have priority in the purchase of 'fine' goods and the 'coarse' goods would, after the payment of duty, be allowed onto the open market.

These 'fine' goods, it should be noted, were not the same as the monopoly commodities, which fell exclusively within the jurisdiction of the treasury. The range of monopoly goods narrowed considerably in the 11th, 12th, 13th centuries: at the end of the 10th century the monopoly embraced all perfumes, medicines and valuable items, including ivory, rhino horn, tortoise shell, pearls, precious stones and damask steel [v. 25, 302-303], but a decree of 1127 ordered the *shibosi* to buy only certain perfumes, rings, agate, the very best-quality ivory and rhino hide [v. 13, juan 89, 48b]. There is also a reference to an Imperial decree which released all items except 'wondrous treasures' from government control [v. 13, juan 89, 48b].

Simultaneously the list of 'fine' goods shortened too, so that by the early 12th century such items as ivory, rhino horn and aromatic wood were not only released from

monopoly control but were even designated 'coarse'. By then only pearls and Borneo camphor were considered 'fine' [v. 25, 310].

All this points to a substantial expansion of Chinese maritime trade in the 12th and 13th centuries. Its vital importance to the government is well illustrated by the following statement: 'Since the capital has been transferred to the south (1127—*auth.*), a certain lack of means has been felt and everything has depended on the state of maritime trade' [13, juan 89, 48b].

This commercial traffic, however, created a drain on China's currency reserves, notably in the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries. Many scholars therefore conclude that this overseas commerce was highly unprofitable for the Empire. The outflow of Chinese coins—gold, silver and especially copper—had increased alarmingly in the late 10th century, prompting the issue of Imperial decrees to forbid the export of money. A similar decree appeared in 1091, and from 1140 every departing ship was searched for copper coinage by a specially-appointed official [v. 25, 327-328]. Our sources report, though, that many traders managed to obviate the ban and that 'it was impossible to cut this short, even on pain of death' [13, juan 89, 48b].

This state of affairs was obviously not beneficial to the national economy. Yet we should bear the following three factors in mind. Firstly, in the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries copper coins were minted in quantities unparalleled in Chinese history, which would certainly have caused a devaluation of the currency had they not been continually shipped overseas. Secondly, the use of Chinese coins in many other countries helped to create conditions favourable to the further expansion of Chinese foreign trade. Indeed, some Chinese historians hold that during this period Chinese currency was accepted as payment throughout East and South Asia and also in East Africa and the Middle East [v. 9, 58]. This would appear to be an exaggeration, though it is true that Chinese coins were in use alongside the local currency in certain parts of the South Seas. And thirdly, we must not imagine that China paid for foreign imports only in hard currency: the list of Chinese products available in Kambujadesha shows that payment was made in a wide range of items.

Thus, we can confidently state that commercial dealings between China and the South Seas were advantageous to all the economies concerned, despite the drain on China's currency reserves. This ever-expanding trade encouraged the overall development of contacts, as well as boosting the growth of towns, handicrafts and commercial-monetary relationships in the southern and south-eastern provinces of China.

Especially remarkable was the growth of the south-eastern ports, with Guangzhou and Quanzhou leading the field up to the 13th century and towns such as Fuzhou and Changzhou close behind. Chinese ship-building and seafaring skills also progressed: Zhang Xuan listed 13 ports that by 13th century had large shipyards where sea-going vessels were built [v. 9, 67].

Some of the travelogues of the 12th and 13th centuries provide detailed information on contemporary Chinese merchant vessels: large and sturdy, able to carry several hundred people and big cargoes, they were heavily-rigged and used oars when becalmed [v. 5, 110-111]. Among major advances in seafaring made at this time, we note primarily the use of the compass, a development first mentioned in the early 12th century—though previous to this Chinese sailors had become highly skilled in navigating by the sun, stars and coastal contours.

In the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries Chinese geographical knowledge enriched, the number of South Seas countries they had contact with increased, adding to it the Philippines, Timor and various parts of West Borneo, and geographical studies containing historical and ethnographical sketches of overseas countries were published. The most famous of these works are: *Ping zhou ke tan* (Remarks Apposite to the Islands in the Unstable Element), written by Zhu You in 1119, *Ling wai dai da* (The Answers of the Representatives [of the Countries Which Lie] beyond the Bounds of Guangdong), by Zhou Qu-fei (1178) and Zhao Ru-gua's *Zhu fan zhi* (Description of All Foreigners), which came out in 1225. The geographical sections of encyclopaedias and official histories began to give much more detailed accounts of South and South-East Asia, and also covered the history, ethnography and political significance of the South Seas in informative detail that was as credible as might be expected

of sources for this period.

Chinese settlers came close behind the Chinese seafarers and traders of the 10th to 13th centuries: the first completely reliable reference speaks of Chinese immigrants in Kambujadesha and dates from the late 13th century [v. 42, 19]. Some Chinese and West European historians have claimed that the exodus to the South Seas was originally prompted by a desire to escape the ravages of Huang Chao's peasant rising, which flared up at the end of the 9th century [v. 34, 168]. We, however, believe it to have been the direct consequence of the expansion and stabilisation of diplomatic and commercial links between China and South-East Asia—which is not to deny that Huang Chao's rising and the civil wars that followed his defeat did not play a significant role in increasing the flow of emigrants. In any case, we can assume that those who left at that time were not feudal lords and mandarins 'fleeing from the insurgents' but peasants and urban residents from south China trying to escape feudal exploitation, the repressive measures imposed after the crushing of the rebellion, and the rampages of the foreign troops called in to help suppress it.

The Chinese settlers not only furthered the development of commerce between China and the South Seas, but also stimulated cultural intercourse.

Relations between China and the South Seas deteriorated with the rise of the Mongol Yuan dynasty in the late 13th century. The envoys sent southwards by Kublai Khan from the 1370s were given orders which differed radically from those of previous embassies. In the words of D.G.E. Hall: 'Kublai Khan was sending envoys to the states of South-East Asia, which had been in the habit of recognising the overlordship of China, to demand tokens of submission. It soon became clear that he was asking not for the usual declarations of respect accompanied by presents of representative products of each country, but for actual obedience, and where this was refused was prepared to back his demands by military action' [8, 69-70].

As a 'token of submission' the Khan expected the ruler in question—or at least one of his close relatives—to appear personally at court with his declaration of obedience, a demand which naturally incensed the countries concerned.

This policy was applied consistently and simultaneously

throughout the South Seas: it was first tried out in Kambujadesha and Champa. The Yuan envoys to Kambujadesha were arrested [v. 8, 106], and the Cham ruler, having received the demand in 1279, sent emissaries to China in 1280 to convey his 'obedience' but did not himself appear at court. When it was suggested that he send his son, he again procrastinated and dispatched instead an ordinary embassy with gifts for the Emperor. In 1281/1282 the Chinese invaded Champa but were beaten off. By 1285 the Yuan forces, cut off from their reinforcements by the Vietnamese, were completely wiped out.

Hall is probably right in believing that success in Champa would have prompted a repeat of this scenario in Kambujadesha. Further, there is ground to believe that the conquest of Champa was viewed as the first step of a general invasion of the South Seas. The *Yuan shi*, for example, reports that a Chinese fleet comprising several hundred ships and up to 10,000 soldiers and sailors was formed at the end of 1280. Early in 1281 it was ordered to go out and conquer the South Seas; the ruler of Champa was to provide extra manpower and supplies [v. 30, 478]. Though the sources are silent on the outcome of this expedition, we assume that it became hopelessly bogged down in Champa in 1281.

Until the late 1280s the Yuan court maintained normal diplomatic relations with the rulers of Java, who were at that time rapidly increasing their hold on the defunct Empire of Sri Vijaya. This policy may be attributed to the fact that most of the Yuan armies were tied up in Champa from 1281 to 1285 and in Burma from 1283 to 1288. After the debacle in Champa and the seizure of Burma, China could turn her attention to the rest of the South Seas.

In 1289 Kertnagara, the ruler of Java, received orders to present himself at court or send a close relative: he responded by arresting the Yuan envoys, branding their faces and returning them to China. The consequent Yuan invasion of Java in 1292 was at first successful, since it had support from the pretender to the Javan throne, but in 1293 enemy attacks and epidemics made disastrous inroads among the Chinese forces. The army was almost completely wiped out.

It appears, therefore, that the Chinese demand that

South Seas rulers should report to the court served as a prelude to and pretext for invasion.

The Chinese attitude to Sumatra and Malacca during this period was less aggressive, as we see from an Imperial decree dated 1277: 'All the foreign countries situated on the islands of the East and South seas nurture a feeling of obedience and duty [to us] in their hearts. Through the people [who come] in foreign ships, my will may be disseminated [there, namely that] those who are sincere may come to court and I will give them a kindly reception. Their visits and commerce with us accord with our own intentions' [30, 477-478]. Diplomatic relations were established between the Yuan court and the principality of Malayu, which sent envoys in 1279 and 1280, evidently in response to the visit in 1279 of Yang Ting-bi, a Chinese ambassador on his way to India. In 1281 a Yuan embassy headed by Adang—the Chinese transcription of a Mongol name—went to the Sumatran principalities of Djambi, Ferlek and Aru and another left Fujian in 1283 to visit Lambri, Perlak (north-west Sumatra) and the Delhi Sultanate [v. 30, 477-478]. A mission under Yang Ting-bi set out in 1285 on an extensive tour of the Malaccan peninsula and Sumatra en route to Southern India, which prompted several of those states to send embassies to China [v. 30, 474].

During the operations against Java in 1292, the Yuan government, fearing resistance from the other South Seas countries, broke off diplomatic and commercial relations with them. In 1293, however, all the envoys from that area who had been held in China were sent home loaded with gold, money and clothing [v. 30, 479]—which signified that the Yuan Emperor had abandoned his aggressive designs on the South Seas after the defeat in Java and was ready to revive the traditional diplomatic ties. This new approach is also seen in the initiation of relations with Majapahit—the Javan kingdom which had emerged after the Chinese defeat there—in 1295 [v. 21, 56] and in an attempt to set up diplomatic contact with Kambujadesha. Zhou Da-guan, one of the members of the Chinese delegation to Kambujadesha in 1295, spent two years there and wrote a book about his experiences on his return, reporting that the mission had been well received by Indravarman III. Yet

there is no record of a further exchange of ambassadors.

Despite the more pacific Yuan approach, the flow of ambassadors from the South Seas began to decrease, especially from the early 14th century. No doubt the South Seas states, observing the Chinese aggression in Indochina and Java, were afraid that their turn was coming next. Among the exceptions to this trend were Sino-Majapahit relations, which actually became more active in the 1320s [v. 20, 56], though they too were almost entirely abandoned around mid-century. Siam too had diplomatic contact with China in the first half of the 14th century, seeking support in her bitter expansionist wars. But such cases went against the overall tendency.

From around 1325 the Yuan dynasty was under severe pressure, evidenced by a growing number of peasant risings and a weakening of the central authority. By the mid-fourteenth century all official contacts with the South Seas had lapsed.

The Yuan attitude to foreign trade had played its part in this decline of mutual interest. The turn of the 13th century is a problematic period for students of Chinese maritime trade: many Chinese scholars, such as Zhang Xing-lang, Feng Cheng-jun, Wu Zi-jin and Zhang Xuan, maintain that trade with South and South-East Asia continued to expand during this period [v. 30, 489-492; 26, 78; 21, 55, 9, 95], while others, namely Zhu Xie and the authors of the *Essays on Chinese History* (edited by Shang Yue) observe a diminution of maritime contact and trade between China and those countries [v. 32, 16-17; 3, 375]. The majority of Western sinologists agree with Zhang Xing-lang and his colleagues.

Marco Polo, Odoric of Pordenone and the Arab geographers and travellers of the late 13th and early 14th centuries tell us that Chinese maritime trade was still lively at that time, and this is corroborated by the Chinese sources: fragmentary data gleaned from the *Yuan shi*, from Zhou Da-guan's *Zhengla feng tu ji* (Notes on the Customs of Cambodia) and Wang Da-quan's *Dao yi zhi lue* (A Brief Description of the Foreign Islanders), written circa 1349, assure us that China continued to conduct official and private trade with the South Seas and the ports on the Malabar and Coromandel coasts of India and that Quanzhou

had become China's most important commercial port, though other coastal towns which had flourished in the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries remained prominent.

At the outset the Yuan government maintained the norms and procedures established under the Song Empire. In 1276, before the new dynasty had extended its power throughout China, an Imperial decree 'opened'—that is, confirmed the authority of—the directorates of merchant vessels in Quanzhou, Ningbo, Shanghai and Ganpu, and shortly afterwards in Guangzhou and Hangzhou [v. 34, 152].

Around the turn of the 13th century the Chinese government launched its first attempts to establish a blanket monopoly over foreign maritime trade, through Imperial decrees which denied Chinese merchants the right to engage in any private maritime trading.

This policy was launched in 1292, in connection with the Java campaign. According to the *Yuan shi*, foreign envoys were detained in the Chinese capital so as to 'prevent merchants from sailing the seas' [30, 479]. This was a temporary measure, prompted by political considerations—yet the limits on private maritime trade were never completely removed.

The registration of, and payment of duty on, foreign ships in Chinese ports were strictly regulated by a 21-point code introduced in 1294. A decree of 1296 forbade foreign envoys coming to China on official business to engage in trade [v. 30, 479], and at the same time Chinese traders were prohibited from exporting gold, silver and all 'fine' goods [v. 30, 479, 491]. Later an embargo was laid on all private maritime trade, by a government which had every intention of seeing the ban observed. The directorates of merchant vessels were closed in 1303. By the time they were reopened in 1314 and private trade again permitted, new rules had been formulated, so strict and so closely enforced that the traders found it practically impossible to pursue their business. A new ban was imposed in 1342, only to be lifted the following year [v. 13, juan 89, 48b].

Yuan policy, inconsistent as it was, evidently represented an attempt to shackle private trade. These limitations were doubtlessly injurious not only to commerce with the South Seas but to foreign contacts overall. The development of the economy and of seafaring skills and the expansion of



international intercourse had been an objective stimulus to the growth of Chinese maritime trade: Fujita's well-documented studies show that the commercial turnover in Quanzhou in this period remained at the level it had attained during the Song era [v. 25, 189]. Svet correctly applies these findings to the Chinese foreign trade as a whole [4, 47].

Having reached the turn of the 13th century in our review of relations between China and the South Seas, we must mention a view current in contemporary sinology and admirably illustrated by an article written by Wu Zi-jin, which appeared in 1957. Basically the idea is that the Yuan wars of conquest in South-East Asia did nothing to hamper the progress of friendly relations between China and that part of the world. So superficial and tendentious is this position that it does not even warrant a serious refutation.

The Ming dynasty was swept to power in 1368 by a wave of popular opposition to the Mongol feudal lords. But the struggle to secure its position, especially in the north and north-west, went on for many years after its official inauguration, forcing the new Chinese government to concentrate in the early period on the conflict with the Mongols and pursue only the most modest aims abroad. The Ming Emperor was content to ensure a fairly regular flow of 'tributary' embassies from overseas—which, in its turn, helped to stimulate maritime trade—by sending out embassies: in 1369, for instance, to Champa, Java, Palembang (in southern Sumatra) [v. 35, 32; 13, 98, *juan* 42a; 16, *juan* 324, 31760(3)], and in 1370 to Kampuchea, Siam and Boni (on Sulawesi) [v. 16, *juan* 324, 31766(2), 31767(2), *juan* 325, 31774(2)].

The Ming government exploited the embassies that were sent in reply from the South Seas for its own political ends, once again advancing the doctrine of Imperial sovereignty. The theoretical underpinnings of official relations with South-East Asia and India established by the Ming dynasty in no way differed from those of their predecessors.

Yet the Ming emperors placed an unusually heavy emphasis on diplomatic relations: the geographical scope of official contacts expanded apace and there was an attempt to introduce the rituals and protocol of diplomatic inter-

course prescribed by the Chinese by legislative action. At the end of the 14th century, for instance, a detailed set of rules for receptions of foreign envoys at home and Chinese abroad was formulated [v. 16, juan 56, 28776(2)-28777(2); 15, vol. 1, 245] and a schedule issued, according to which each country was to send envoys to China once every three years.

The Ming interest in widening and stabilising diplomatic contacts in the south and south-west became even more evident in the early 15th century: in 1402 Imperial ambassadors visited a large number of South Seas states [v. 16, juan 325, 31780(3)]; in 1403 Chinese envoys were in Siam four times, in Java three times, in Champa twice and once in Malacca [v. 16, juan 324, 31761(4), 31768(2), 31770(4); juan 325, 31776(1), 31780(3)-(4)]. From 1405 the Chinese fleet made regular trips to the South Seas and Indian Ocean: the most famous of these expeditions were those of Zheng He, whose fleet—between 40 and 60 large ships attended by smaller craft—was manned by an army slightly less than 30,000-strong; he made seven tours around the South Seas and Indian Ocean, in 1405/1407, 1407/1409, 1409/1411, 1413/1415, 1417/1419, 1421/1422 and 1431/1433.

At various times, Zheng He made landfall on the coasts of Champa, Kampuchea, Siam, Malacca, Palembang, Samudra (in the north-west of Sumatra), Boni, Brunei, Kelantan and Pahang (on the Malaccan peninsula), Lambri, Nagur, Lidai, Tamiang and Linkasuka (on Sumatra), the Philippines, the Sulu archipelago, Poulo Condore, Aor, Sembilian, Timor, Bras, Gelam, Belitung and elsewhere [v. 32, 71-84]. Other Chinese embassies and expeditions visited these and other countries too: the Hou Xian expedition to Bengal (1415), for instance, the Zhang Qian expedition of 1416-1417, and Wang Jing-hong's expedition to Sumatra in 1434.

Almost all the South Seas countries visited by the Chinese in the early 15th century sent embassies to the Imperial court. Several of them sent yearly missions in the opening quarter-century: in 1423 alone, 1,200 people arrived in China on official business [v. 16, juan 326, 31788(2)]. Heads of ruling houses came from Boni in 1408 and 1412, from Malacca in 1411, 1419, 1424 and 1433 and Samudra in 1434, while the chieftains of several tribes on the Sulu archipelago paid their respects in 1417 [v. 16, juan

325, 31774(3), 31776(1), 31777(1)-(3), 31780(1), 31779(1)]. In sum, official exchanges between China and the South Seas developed at an unprecedented rate in the early 15th century.

The Chinese government used various methods to attain their aims. Zheng He, to take one illustration, interlarded persuasion, invitations to visit the court and lavish presentations with open and deliberate pressure—his troops went into action in 1407 in Palembang and in 1415 on the island of Sumatra [v. 16, juan 304, 31462(1)-(4)]. The Chinese conquest of Vietnam in 1407 would hardly have gone unnoticed in the South Seas either. But Chinese influence in the South Seas proved fragile and short-lived: a profound economic, social and political crisis forced the Ming dynasty to cut short its activity there from the 1430s. Diplomatic contacts with certain states were maintained to the end of the 15th century, but early in the 16th century they all lapsed almost entirely. The final blow to Chinese foreign relations in the Far East came in the early 16th century, with the arrival of the Portuguese and other West European colonialists. The Ming government reacted by placing a legal embargo on all relations—official and commercial—with any overseas country.

The quickening of official contacts in the early 15th century boosted commerce: the Ming government encouraged official trade and permitted private trade of the overseas countries with China, though it limited private trade of the Chinese merchants abroad. From 1371 to 1452, numerous prohibitions were imposed on Chinese citizens who wished to trade with overseas countries or do business with foreign merchants in China: evidently the government had not abandoned its intention of operating a monopoly over maritime trade. Yet private maritime trade developed rapidly, especially after the Chinese naval expeditions of the early 15th century. The ban was not reaffirmed since 1452 and private trade flourished untrammelled until contact with overseas countries was made illegal in the 1520s.

The sources for the Ming period give a fairly detailed picture of the range of goods involved in foreign maritime commercial transactions: China imported mainly various kinds of expensive tropical wood, costly items used by artists (such as ivory, rhino horn, tortoise shell and kingfisher

feathers), tin, iron, sulphur, copper sulphate and various sorts of dyes, medicines and cosmetics with organic and non-organic ingredients, fuels, black pepper, raw cotton, wax, rattan, fabrics, matting, artefacts, precious stones, pearls, and other luxury items; Chinese exports consisted of cloth of all kinds, especially a wide range of silks, clothing, porcelain, bronze and iron ware, artefacts, jewelry, paper and foodstuffs such as rhubarb and sweetmeats.

The colonial incursion from Western Europe cut short this thriving exchange. The Europeans began their bid for control over the trade routes in the South Seas with the Portuguese seizure of Malacca in 1511.

Another result of the reactivation of Imperial interest in the South Seas in the early 15th century was an increase in the number of Chinese settlers in those areas.

Though the Mongol conquest of China had a palpable effect on the flow of emigrants, other circumstances prompted certain Chinese citizens to seek asylum or a better environment for their commercial activities in the South Seas around the turn of the 13th century. We have proof that Chinese colonies were established in Tumasik (Singapore), Malacca and Java by the mid-fourteenth century [v. 42, 282]. Later colonisation was the direct result of expanding political and commercial links. The travelogues of Ma Huan, Fei Xin and Gong Zhen, all members of Zheng He's expeditions, mention Chinese colonies in several areas of West Java and in Palembang consisting of 1,000 or more settlers. In the 15th and 16th centuries large Chinese communities sprang up in Malacca, along the coast of West Borneo, on Belitung, and on Luzon (in the Philippines). The Luzon settlement, not far from where Manila now stands, had a population of over 25,000 in the early 17th century [v. 16, *juan* 323, 31756(2)], but smaller groups were to be found all over South-East Asia.

These were permanent settlements, whose inhabitants engaged mainly in trade, and to a much lesser extent in handicrafts and agriculture. Completely independent of the Chinese government, they usually had some kind of internal self-government. The colonists retained the Chinese language, customs, style of dress and so on, and kept themselves apart, as a rule, from the indigenous population, thus serving as a channel of Chinese cultural influence in the

lands where they settled.

The closer links between China and the South Seas that grew up in the 15th century stimulated cultural exchanges. Many representatives of the ruling elite in the South Seas visited China several times, and some stayed there for long periods, absorbing Chinese mores. Champa, for example, adopted the Chinese system of setting examinations for aspiring holders of official positions [v. 36, 113].

Chinese books were also exported. We know, for instance, that 100 copies of *The Lifestyle of Various Women from Ancient Times to the Present Day* were sent to Siam in 1405, and that this was not an isolated case [v. 36, 114]. We assume that at least some of the books were of considerable cultural and scientific value, and helped foreign noblemen and government officials to a better understanding of the Chinese language and literary heritage.

Chinese artefacts which found their way to the South Seas made their own impact on local handicrafts; we may trace individual examples of Chinese influence in indigenous music, art and architecture. Zheng He, for instance, built memorial and religious edifices in several of the countries on his itinerary, and in Malacca started to build a whole architectural complex. Later sources tell us that the local Sultan's palace was based on a Chinese models [v. 40, 126].

We should not, however, overemphasise the Chinese cultural influence on the South Seas in the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries: it was palpable in Champa, slight in Kampuchea and Siam, and barely noticeable elsewhere. And moreover, the exchange was not unilateral. A closer awareness of life in the South Seas at the turn of the 14th century brought certain elements of its rich and independent culture into the Chinese cultural framework. The great success of the 'travelogue' genre in 15th- and 16th-century China gave readers a detailed understanding of the appearance, mores, rituals, costume, character and styles of government of the peoples of the South Seas. And it is surely no coincidence that the spread of Islam in China occurred at a time when it was becoming firmly established in the lands to the south.

The widening of foreign contacts at the turn of the 14th century, finally, stimulated the knowledge of South-East Asian languages in China. By the end of the 14th

century there were 60 people working in this section of the official translation service [v. 37, juan 8, 20a-b].

Summarising the development of contacts between China and the South Seas up to the 16th century, when the Western European 'invasion' turned international relations in the Far East into new channels, we note that those contacts had existed for over 1,500 years, had developed erratically, especially in the early stages, and had been extremely unfriendly at times: the wars with the Vietnamese and Champa in the 3rd to 10th centuries A.D. were particularly injurious to the culture and economy of South-East Asia, and the Yuan wars of conquest at the end of the 13th century are another dark page in the history of this area. The countries of the South Seas, despite Chinese attempts to bring them into a 'tributary' relationship, retained their independence and conducted their political and commercial dealings with China entirely in their own interests. The growth of political and commercial intercourse, and the simultaneous cultural exchange, were beneficial both to the Chinese people and the peoples of the South Seas.

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NOTES ON TRADE  
IN THE MING ERA

Well into the modern era China maintained permanent links primarily with the countries of the Far East. In addition, the forms of her intercourse with the outside world, developed over countless ages and preserved intact into the mid-nineteenth century, differed radically from their western European equivalents. European travellers to the Far East immediately noticed the difference between the Chinese attitude to commerce and diplomacy and their own [v. 8, 277]. As Louis Dermigny remarks in his monumental work on European trade in Guangzhou: 'Europeans viewed contacts with other peoples as the most prosaic and yet the most necessary of undertakings, as a means of making money and becoming rich, and they accorded no kind of ritual status to these operations.... The Chinese, on the contrary ... saw them in the context of a general conception of the universe, attached to them a primarily moral significance—or, more precisely, regarded them exclusively as part of the world order' [9, 288].

This outline, abstract as it is, offers a reasonably accurate view of the unique nature of Chinese relations with the outside world—a world which was viewed as an undifferentiated territorial complex cemented by mutual moral and political claims. The Chinese government could not countenance foreign trade as an independent sphere of activity: it had to be meshed with the 'sovereign-vassal' system of political relations [v. 9, 288]. The sinologist Hou Ren-zhi put it in a nutshell: 'No tribute meant no trade; tribute brought recompense' [7, 184].

In Chinese official documents we find no less eloquent expressions of this same attitude. The Emperor Xuan-zong announced in 1431, for instance, that 'China has certainly not initiated trade because she is short of horses and cattle. [On the contrary, the "barbarians"] are entirely dependent on China. If [we were] to discontinue trade, they would undoubtedly become embittered. Thus the court's authorisation of trade is also an expression of conciliatory humaneness' [7, 185]. Or, more concretely: 'At the beginning of the Ming [era] horse trading was organised in the East and tea trading in the West. All this was done in order to stabilise the frontiers and ... cut down on defence expenditure' [7, 185].

The official documents give the clearest possible formulation of the aims of Chinese foreign commercial policy, showing that its motivation was not economic but frankly political, even military. We must now determine the extent to which these declarations coincided with the measures actually taken in this sphere.

The tea and horse trade on the Sino-Tibetan border during the Ming era offers useful material for such a study. This field has already been widely covered—by Hou Ren-zhi [7], Mitsutaka Tani [4 and 5], and Rossabi [10], who has provided an extensive bibliography [10, 166-168]. Our aim is not, however, to review the issue as a whole, but rather to establish the ways in which the overall principles of Chinese foreign trading policy were illustrated by the tea and horse trade between China and Tibet.

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Viewing the tea and horse trade from the geographical perspective, we see that the Mongols could offer a substantial number of horses in exchange for agricultural produce and various artefacts. The south-western provinces of China—Yunnan, Guizhou, and Sichuan—had a surfeit of tea, a vital staple for the nomads. The problem, of course, was that immense distances separated south-west China from Mongolia, and there was no convenient communicating route. This leads us to assume that the trading centres were located in some place equally accessible to travellers from the northern frontier and the south-western provinces.

It is immediately clear that the patterns of tea and horse trading in the Ming period were moulded by forces stronger than the purely economic and geographic. It would have made good economic sense for the Chinese to obtain their horses from the regions where high-quality mounts were available in large numbers—that is, from the Mongolian steppes. But, amazingly enough, the Chinese government was extremely reluctant to trade with the Mongols. Horse markets opened on the initiative—or, more accurately, on the insistence—of the Mongols were closed at the earliest possible opportunity by the Chinese authorities. This happened in Datong in 1438 and in Datong and Xuanfu in 1551 [v. 7, 186, 191]. Regular trade was established in this region only when Altan Khan,<sup>1</sup> who had been ravaging northern China with impunity for several decades, forced the Chinese to reopen the horse markets in 1571 [v. 11, 2-13, 16; 1, 187-193]. The Ming simply did not want to trade with the Mongols; they did all in their power to prevent not only weapons, cloth [v. 2, 50, 59],<sup>2</sup> and metal goods, but even kitchenware [v. 11, 18-19; 5, 561; 4, 214] and paper [v. 2, 50] from making their way to the Mongol steppes.<sup>3</sup>

The Chinese authorities could not countenance the idea that commerce could be a means of maintaining peace; the view was that trade with China's major political adversary—the Mongols—was not only pointless but actually harmful.

So why were the Mongols so willing to hand over horses, their primary 'strategic' resource, to their enemy? We are evidently dealing not so much with objective political

<sup>1</sup> The grandson of Dayan Khan, leader of the Tumut Mongols in South Mongolia [v. 1, 150].

<sup>2</sup> At one stage the embargo on cloth was so strict that even military colonists in the border regions could not obtain clothing [v. 2, 60].

<sup>3</sup> The jealous interest which the Chinese lavished on those of their goods destined for the 'barbarians' is illustrated by two instances. When the horse trade reopened in 1571 there was an official debate on whether to let the Mongols have iron kitchenware or only copper items [v. 7, 9, 233; 10, 18-19]. Further, when the Chinese discovered that the headbands used by enemy Tibetan soldiers were made of Chinese cloth, they were so distressed that they sent a special report on this discovery to the Emperor [v. 2, 244].

realities as with two distinct reactions to those realities, rooted in different types of political organisation.

\* \* \*

China was short of horses. She was not even able to provide enough of them to satisfy her border troops. And numerous official documents, far from dissembling on this issue, speak frankly of it as a chronic problem. 'What is lacking in China is horses,' mourns one source [2, 21]. The grave need for horses is also illustrated in a report submitted by the military mandarins of Sichuan in 1429: 'In the province of Sichuan, in all the military regions (*wei*, or 'garrisons'), even in the cavalry, eight or nine men out of ten do not have horses. On campaign [they] are completely useless' [2, 97]. A report from Taozhou records that the border troops did not even have enough horses to make their watch patrols [v. 2, 108]. And complaints such as these are not limited to the early Ming period. A document dated 1510, for example, states that the borderlands were regularly pillaged because the Chinese troops there did not have enough horses to put up an adequate resistance [v. 2, 339].

The Chinese government did its best to provide its own horses: official stables were set up in Zhili province in 1395 and in Shandong and Henan provinces at some later date, but none of them proved worthwhile. Local magnates and mandarins seized the pasturelands and ploughed them up, the horses were kept in poor conditions and they made bad mounts. By the later 15th century this official initiative lost its impetus and in 1581 all the stables were closed [v. 4, 21-37].

There was no alternative but to buy horses from the 'barbarians'. But still the Chinese government refused to trade with those who had more and better horses and preferred to have the less bellicose Tibetan tribes as commercial partners.

The centre of Chinese military and political life moved southwards during the rise of the Ming dynasty and remained there for a considerable time; the formal proof of this is that the first Ming capital was the town that is today called Nanking. Consequently the western regions of Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhou provinces became strategically impor-

tant. These regions, which were close to Tibet, therefore became the centre of the tea and horse trade [v. 5, 85-87]. But from the late 1380s (the twenties of the *Hong-wu* period), after military and strategic considerations had relocated the capital in the north, the tea and horse trade declined in the southern regions. It re-emerged in a more northerly location, in Shaanxi, during the *Yongle* period (1403-1424) [v. 5, 91]. Simultaneously a second horse-trading centre developed in Liaodong [v. 7, 183-184].

Thus it is clear that the choice of trading points and trading partners depended not on economic motives but on military and strategic considerations.

\* \* \*

Now let us see how this attitude to trade affected the forms of trade adopted. Again the official documents are useful sources of information. The Ming official history states that 'the Tibetans are fond of *kumys*, [but,] since they have no tea, they suffer, [so much that they] can [actually] fall ill. Therefore since the time of the Tang and Song the exchange of tea for horses has been used as a means of curbing the Qiang and Rong.<sup>1</sup> In the Ming era the control over them became even more strict' [3, 551]. A report made to the Emperor by the Minister of Finance in 1523 adds: '[Our] government forces the Fan "barbarians" to drive their horses to China and rewards them [for this] with tea. [This practice] is called *chafa*. It is used not only because China has no good horses and wants to obtain them, but also because the Fan "barbarians" live on the borderlands of China and this practice binds them' [2, 366].

The Chinese mandarins believed that a well thought-out state tea policy would control the 'barbarians' better than tens of thousands of well-armed soldiers [v. 6, 2988/3]. Success would only be possible, however, if private trade were brought firmly in hand. As one of the most important mandarins involved in the state tea trade remarked: 'If private trade [with the "barbarians"] flourishes, we will lose

<sup>1</sup> Ethnic designations such as these are not usually applied accurately in Chinese documents. In the Ming era the Tibetans were variously named Dim Yi, Man, Qiang and Rong.

the means of control over their minds and fates' [6, 2988/3]. The facts show that the Ming government actually began by moving against private trade: the earliest measures to introduce the state monopoly on tea were taken in 1361 [3, 551; 6, 2984/3].

So private trade in tea and horses was forbidden [v. 2, 16] and miscreants were put to death [v. 3, 551]. Mandarins serving in the border regions who permitted tea to be exported also suffered the death penalty [v. 3, 551], and subsequently Chinese who traded even with Tibetans bound for the capital were threatened with the stocks [v. 2, 363].

Trade in tea and horses was permitted only in areas specially put aside for this purpose—the *chamasi* ('directorates'). Three *chamasi* were created in Shaanxi between 1368 and 1398 (the *Hong-wu* period): in Qinzhou in 1372 (now the sub-district of Tianshui in Gansu province); in Hezhou (Gansu) in 1374; and in Taozhou (Gansu). In 1397 the Qinzhou *chamasi* was transferred to Xining. These three trading points, the largest of which was in Hezhou, were the most permanent centres of Sino-Tibetan trade until the close of the Ming period [v. 5, 87-88].

At first horses were not brought regularly to these points: the sharp fluctuation of recorded sales indicates that the volume of trade depended on supply, not demand. For instance, 171 horses changed hands at the Qinzhou and Hezhou *chamasi* in 1377, 1,691 in 1379, 2,050 in 1380 and 181 in 1381 [2, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25]. Tibet had many more spare horses than this; obviously the Tibetan merchants were not being offered sufficient incentive.

Thus a curious situation arose during the early Ming. Zhu Yuan-zhang's active military policy in Mongolia could be seriously hampered if his troops lacked horses, one of the most vital 'strategic' resources [7, 184]. Yet the trade in 'barbarian' horses had to be limited, also in the interests of security. This limitation led to a shortage of horses which, in its turn, weakened the frontier defences.

The subordination of economic to political concerns under the Ming dynasty did not, therefore, constitute an adequate solution—for the chronic shortage of horses became in itself a political problem.

The Chinese government tried to assure a reasonable supply of horses for the army by applying administrative

compulsion. In 1393 a new system of exchange with the Tibetans—the 'golden *paiza*' system—was introduced. 'In the 26th year of the *Hong-wu* period.... Send envoys to all the frontier Fan of Xiliang, Yongchang, Gansu, Shandan, Xining, Lintao, Hezhou, Taozhou, Minzhou and Guchang.<sup>1</sup> Give [them all] gold and copper *paizas* and explain the following to every clan and tribe: In the past, when the court felt a need for something which was in your possession, it obtained it [from you] in return for tea and never imposed any enforced dues [upon you]. At the present time it has become known [to us] that the border authorities often behave in an unseemly manner, often refer to non-existent court decrees, do you harm and do not allow you to live in peace. Therefore [I] have prepared special gold and copper *paizas* (a kind of sceptre used as plenipotentiary credentials—*trans.*)—to give to every tribe. If an envoy comes to you to demand dues or duties, first compare the *paizas* and if they are identical, obey the order. If they are not identical, the miscreants should be put into chains and sent to the capital to answer for their deeds [2, 38].

At first sight it might appear that this order was drawn up to protect the Tibetans from the arbitrary behaviour of the Chinese authorities. One of its aims was, indeed, to curb official arbitrariness, since this was one of the major disincentives to Tibetan participation in the horse markets. However, the main goal was to dictate the time, place and conditions (norms and prices) of the exchange. The new system was to be obligatory, as we see from the inscriptions on the *paizas*: at the top—'A decree of the all-wise Emperor'; to the left—'When the *paizas* are identical, the delivery must be fulfilled'; to the right—'Miscreants to be put to death' [3, 552].

The Chinese naturally viewed this regulated exchange as a kind of levy. 'The system for obtaining horses under our dynasty is called *chafa*. It is similar to the land tax, *fu*, and the poll tax, *yong*. [The Tibetans] offer us horses and we reward them with tea. They respect us, [and we] meet their wishes half-way' [6, 2988].

<sup>1</sup> Towns and villages along the frontier, all within the present-day Gansu province.



The new system worked while the Ming dynasty was flourishing. The *Ming shi* tells us that 41 *paizas* were handed out to the Fan, and that the *paiza*-holder was called in to exchange his credentials once every three years [3, 552]. And the system produced the desired results. In 1398, for instance, Li Jing-long, a high-ranking mandarin, brought 13,518 Tibetan horses to the capital [2, 46]. Overall the *paiza* system ensured that the Chinese got 13,800 horses for every 500,000 *jin*<sup>1</sup> of tea [3, 552].

The Chinese had killed two birds with one stone. The Tibetans, being fully dependent on the Chinese government for their tea, were obliged to appear regularly at the *cham-asi*; the exchange was thus both a means of obtaining horses and a means of controlling the Tibetan peoples. The official Chinese historians corroborate this view: the compilers of the *Ming shi* ended their account of the *paiza* system with phrase: 'That is how Tai-zu governed the Fan' [3, 552; cf. 2, 366-367].

Obviously this state of affairs could exist only while the Tibetans were under Chinese political and military pressure. The exchange was not based on mutual economic interest but was one of the perquisites attaching to political ascendancy, and thus depended on the real authority that the mandarins, backed by the garrisons in Xining, Hezhou, Taozhou and elsewhere, exercised over the Tibetan tribes who lived nearby. And the extent of this authority in turn rested on the internal political situation in the Empire and circumstances on the northern frontiers in other words, it was subject to the kind of sharp fluctuations, which prompted the 'golden *paiza*' episode.

The *paiza* system, applied consistently during the *Hong-wu* period, later operated more sporadically. This explains the wide divergence of opinion on the length of time it was in operation. The *Ming shi* states specifically that it was abolished from 1403, the beginning of Cheng-zu's reign [c. 3, 552], while other sources give 1406 or 1416 as the cut-off point [v. 5, 95]. Mitsutaka Tani, the Japanese sinologist, holds that the system existed at least until the last deliveries of Sichuan tea were brought to Shaanxi—that is, until 1449 [v. 5, 96-97]. Various attempts to revive it

<sup>1</sup> At that time a *jin* was approximately 600 grams.

subsequently—for example, from 1522 to 1554 during the *Jiajing* period—were unsuccessful [v. 6, 2988/3], and indeed the Mongol incursion into Qinghai in the early 16th century [v. 1, 144-145] put an end to all hopes of restoring it. The War Ministry, responding to a suggestion that the system be reinstated, declared: ‘At the present moment (1551—*auth.*) the Fan tribes are insincere and inconstant, and the northern brigands—the *lu*—busy themselves with constant looting. [Therefore, if we now] give them [golden *paizas*], they will lose them again. But if they lose them and we give them more and they lose them again, what will [then] become of the government’s prestige? The golden *paizas* are given to the Fan so that they will deliver horses. But the Fan deliver horses [only] in order to obtain tea. All the Fan are extremely fond of tea and if they cannot get it they suffer and even die. If we impose a strict ban on illegal trade [in tea], they will become obedient, even if [we] do not govern them. [And then it will be possible] to collect horses without giving out golden *paizas*. But if [private] illegal trade flourishes, we will lose the means of control over their minds and fates. Even if [we] do give them golden *paizas*, we will still receive no horses’ [3, 397].

The *paiza* system had been superseded in official thinking.

The 1550s was a difficult time for Chinese foreign policy: Altan Khan was making bloody forays deep into Chinese territory, and Chinese power abroad was waning, which explains the War Ministry’s precise formulation of the new approach to exchange with the Fan. During the *Hong-wu* period Chinese political clout had enabled her to satisfy her economic needs. In the *Jiajing* period (1522-1566), though, the Chinese court tried to transform China’s economic superiority over her neighbours into a means of political control. But the Chinese were frustrated in this aim by formidable obstacles whose origins were both external and internal.

This does not, however, mean that the *Jiajing* period was some kind of turning point in Chinese policy on the Fan borderlands; the change had already begun in the *Yongle* period (1403-1424). Nor is it the case that from the *Yongle* period to the fall of the Ming dynasty the Chinese court pursued a consistent policy of ‘economicising’ its

relations with the Tibetans in much the same way that it has 'politicised' them in the early years of the dynasty. Chinese policy on the Fan periphery leaned now one way now the other, depending on the general state of foreign affairs at the time, although tending, under pressure of circumstances, towards the lines formulated during the *Jiajing* period. The vacillations of Chinese policy are seen distinctly in the brief account of the tea trade given in the *Ming shi* [v. 3, 551-553].

It should be noted, however, that the forced transition from 'politicised' forms of exchange to their more purely economic counterparts did not fundamentally alter the Chinese government's attitude to trade: the de-politicised form of trade was still primarily viewed from a political point of view. Thus Liu Liang-ting, the tea censor, reported in 1531 that there are three *chamasi* in Shaanxi. They collect tea and exchange it for horses. They provide the border forces with all they need in the event of an expedition or a battle and at the same time they also strengthen the 'barbarians' desire to remain faithful [to China] [2, 383].

\* \* \*

Having discussed the relationship between the traditional Chinese approach to foreign policy and the choice of location and the forms of trade in tea and horses, let us now trace the effect this had on the organisation of the tea trade within China itself.

In trading with the Tibetans, China naturally pursued both an economic and a political aim, and therefore had two representatives conducting her business: the merchant and the government official. The government was primarily interested in establishing political control over the Tibetans. Material needs were to be satisfied only as a result of the attainment of political ends.

Experience proved that the most effective form of trade was that of horses for tea. In time the government was forced to permit the Chinese merchant to take part in this trade too, though—it goes without saying—continuing to regard the trading in tea and horses as a primarily political phenomenon. However, the Chinese and Tibetan mer-

chants did not share this point of view.

The Chinese merchants had strictly economic goals; in this respect their interests exactly coincided with those of their Tibetan counterparts. And, though this trade was 'politicised', it was not at their demand: they were the victims, not the agents, of this process.

In sum, the Chinese and Tibetan merchants found themselves ranged up together against the Chinese government. What effect did this divergence of interest have on the tea trade?

The tea monopoly in China mentioned above was organised differently at different periods: the one constant was governmental control. Special permission was required to trade in tea; the state laid down the timetables and locations of trading; and unsanctioned trade in tea—or, indeed, in any other commodity—with the 'barbarians' was forbidden [v. 2, 16]. The state tax on the tea growers was usually a tithe of the harvest: this assured the government of vast quantities of tea which was put onto the external market via the *chamasi*, the official tea-horse trading points, which were situated in Qinzhou, Taozhou, Hezhou, Yangzhou, Diaozhou and elsewhere [2, 6, 27].

At times, especially in the early years of the Ming dynasty, the delivery of horses to the *chamasi* was spasmodic. The Chinese regulated the supply through a pricing policy: the *chamasi* authorities were simply permitted to raise the price—offer more tea, silk or whatever per horse—should the deliveries slacken off [v. 2, 16, 34]; this naturally stimulated commercial activity. The enforced administrative regulation of the exchanges that was later imposed did much to render the operation less a matter of individual volition.<sup>1</sup> A document of the later Ming era asks a significant question: 'All the Fan tribes ... annually make deliveries of horses. Why are only the Fan who live in Minzhou not subject to this regulation?' [2, 433]. This indicates that non-participation in the deliveries was viewed as an exception to a general rule. But these were not uncompensated requisitions: the government offered in return various commodities, primarily tea, in quantities prescribed by the Chinese government.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The quantities of deliveries are given in, for example, 2, 120.

<sup>2</sup> The norms are given in 2, 50, 58, 61, 445.

The tea monopoly, the ban on illegal horse-trading within China, the control over internal tea-trading, the concentration of foreign trade at the *chamasi*, the obligatory delivery system, the pricing policy and other factors constituted a powerful weapon in the hands of the Chinese authorities.

None the less, most of the documents which touch on the tea trade complain of the inefficacy of the tea policy and the detrimental effect of illegal trading. Statements of this kind begin to appear in the early days of the Ming dynasty. The chronicle of 1384, for instance, speaks of a raid—really an armed attack—on the private tea-traders. Smugglers and army deserters, who had congregated in a remote and inaccessible area to the south of the Qinling range in Shaanxi, were making their living by brigandage and illegal tea-trading. The Emperor ordered the local officials to send their troops out to deal with them and as a result 140 prisoners were taken and sent to the capital. The sentence passed against them is interesting: 'Runaways have gathered in the mountains and around the lakes to rob and plunder. They should be [caught and] held, as should those who are [illegally] trading in tea. But if one investigates their intentions, [it can be seen] that they were led to this by hunger and cold, [concern for] food and clothing. And it is possible to sympathise with them. [Therefore] the death penalty should be commuted and [they] should be sent into exile' [2, 28].

We see here that private trade in tea was not yet considered a crime, that the smugglers were the object of 'sympathy', of something approaching humanitarian treatment—a symptom, no doubt, of the 'democratic' leanings of the first Ming Emperor. The government had still not realised the damage that private tea-trading could do to the state tea policy. But the tone changed over the years—in 1397 an Imperial decree stated: 'In ancient times the *wangs* and *di*, ruling [the Celestial Empire], always strictly discriminated between the "barbarians" and the Chinese. For the Di and Rong peoples are greedy and insatiable. If [these people] are not controlled, they will certainly begin to treat [China] with scorn, go on forays and cause disorder on the frontiers. The western Fan from the Wusizang and Changhexi regions of Duogan have since olden times driven horses to China in

exchange for tea. There was a transfer of excess to the places where there was a shortage. [But] in recent times, because tea is smuggled abroad, they bring very few horses to the markets. As a result their (the Tibetans'—*auth.*) horses become more expensive every day, while Chinese tea becomes cheaper. This gradually generates in them a derisive and slighting attitude [to China]'. It is then suggested that the frontier troops be posted closer to the points of contact with Tibet. And the document ends pathetically: 'Can it be that I am doing this for gain?' The answer is immediately forthcoming: 'Wishing to govern the Yi and Di, it is impossible to proceed otherwise' [2, 42].

Similar statements abound throughout the Ming period. But to fill out the picture, let us take one more Imperial decree of 1397, intended for the Sichuan provincial authorities: 'Tea from the lands of Shu and Qin (Shaanxi and Sichuan provinces—*auth.*) is drunk in an extensive area ranging 5,000 *li* from Diaomen and Liya to Duogan—Wusizang. The people in these areas could not survive a single day without it. In recent times a clandestine [tea] trade over the border has developed because the border mandarins do not examine [travellers] sufficiently strictly.

'[Commodities] which the "barbarians" do not value should be made rare, and then they will become more expensive. Thus also with tea. [This policy] was begun under the Tang and flourished under the Song. Under the Song it brought great gains. But former dynasties used it not only for gain. For the method of control over the Rong and Di consists of cheapening what they have and making expensive that which they do not have. There exists in our state a monopoly on tea basically so that it may be exchanged for horses and thus supply the government's need. If we permit [them] to exchange only red [woollen] yarn and suchlike things [for tea], this will be gainful to the Fan "barbarians" but very few horses will be brought to China. [Acting along these lines,] can we really expect to establish control over the Yi and Di "barbarians"? ' [2, 43].

What do these documents tell us? First of all, both make a strict distinction between politics and economics. The state economic policy with regard to the 'barbarians' was not aimed at making a profit but at establishing control over them. Thus a natural preference for state trade is

expressed, while private trade is viewed not simply as an illegal activity or a source of material loss to the government, but as an insurmountable obstacle to Chinese control over the neighbouring non-*Han* peoples.

Yet there were times when the government was forced to encourage private commerce: when it was urgently necessary to supply the border regions with food stuffs, to help the victims of natural disasters or to transport tea to the trading points [3, 552], tea was officially bartered for comestibles, including salt, and private merchants were enlisted to carry the tea to the borderlands on commission. One such episode during the *Zhengtong* period (1436-1449) is worth relating in detail.

In the preceding *Xuande* period (1426-1435) the Shaanxi markets had been short of tea while vast stocks of it were rotting in Sichuan [2, 111, 123, 131]. The government could not itself transport these stocks and so employed merchants as carriers, on a commission of one-tenth of the transported tea and salt (which was also a monopoly commodity). 'The tenth year of *Xuande* (1435—*auth.*). A report from the military directorate (*wei*) of Xining in Shaanxi province. At the present time there is not enough tea to buy horses at the *chamasi*, while there are government reserves of tea in the province of Sichuan, in Changdu and all the regions (*fu*). I ask permission to call merchants to those places, so that they may transport the tea to our directorate. To permit an error of 10 *jin* [either way] for every 100 *jin* [carried]. And moreover to give six salt tickets each.... [The Emperor:] "Permitted"' [2, 131].

The following passage illustrates the results of this policy. 'The first year of *Zhengtong* (1436—*auth.*). Abolish the policy of paying in salt for the transport of tea.... In essence the tea tax [was introduced] for the benefit of China and the convenience of the Fan people.... [But] in recent times the merchants have been permitted to find their own porters and transport government tea to Xining and Ganzhou for barter. [For this] they were given government salt. But the merchants, having obtained official papers, occupied themselves solely with selling [their] illegal tea. [As a result] government stocks have been smaller than average for the past five to seven years. The prices for government tea have fallen heavily, so that it has become dif-

ficult to buy horses' [2, 133].

It is interesting to note that the merchants who transported the tea did not help the government to supply the areas where it was needed. Reports of this period tell us that tea was still short in Xining and the government had to find some way of moving it from Sichuan [v. 2, 136, 159].

The competition for commercial tea was so intense that government tea, finding no buyers, rotted at the markets where business had previously been so brisk. The commercial tea trade had brought down the price of tea and pushed up the price of horses [v. 2, 147], and government tea became such a dead commodity that the authorities had to close one of the *chamasi*. 'The seventh year of *Zhengtong* (1442—*auth.*). Close the *chamasi* in Gansu, in Shaanxi province. Previously the *chamasi* were created to collect tea, attract merchants, buy horses from them to supply the frontiers and reward the merchants with tea. Subsequently those merchants began to buy private tea and thus satisfy their needs fully and with benefit [to themselves]. [Of course] they no longer came to exchange horses for government tea. As a result government tea piled up in large quantities and rotted' [2, 149]. This coincided with the time when the frontier troops in Gansu did not even have enough horses to make their patrols [v. 2, 139].

As the maxim has it: 'One swallow does not make a summer.' But if we range outside the *Zhengtong* period, we find similar episodes in the *Chenghua* (1465-1487), *Hongzhi* (1488-1505), *Zhendge* (1506-1521), *Jiajing* (1522-1566) and other periods—in fact at any time throughout Ming history. The government was continually forced to involve private merchants in the tea trade, thus boosting the importance of private commerce<sup>1</sup> and impairing the government tea-horse trading system. Private trade was forbidden, reintroduced and again forbidden *ad infinitum* [v. 3, 552-553],

<sup>1</sup> From the *Chenghua* period tea was intensively cultivated close to the *chamasi*, which stimulated a rapid growth of tea production in Zhaanxi and attracted yet more 'private' tea to the trading points. In the *Hongzhi* period a private system of tea transportation was set up and, finally, in the *Zhengtong* period, private merchants were allowed to participate in the tea trade on an equal footing with the government, in the *guanshang duifeng* system [v. 5, 818-819].



but always with the same result: private trade flourished, government tea mouldered [v. 2, 384] and the frontiers cried out for horses [v. 2, 374].

All this might lead one to wonder what made private trade so strong that it was able to defeat the government system time and again. We indicated the answer above, when we noted that the Tibetan merchants were more willing to trade with their Chinese counterparts than with the government. In the first case the transaction was conducted on an equal footing, whereas the government, in its constant insistence on 'politicising' the exchange, placed the Tibetans in a disadvantageous position at the outset. And, government aims apart, the incontinent behaviour of the authorities in the borderlands was hardly such as would attract the Tibetan merchant to trade. Our sources show that the mandarins involved in the exchange cheated on the valuation of the horses, paid with poor-quality tea and made unmandated requisitions—in sum, they fleeced their victims [v. 2, 38, 44, 50-51, 121, 265].

Private trade was favoured by a number of factors which do not fall within our sphere of interest on this occasion. We wish only to state the fact that private trade was more viable than government trade.

\* \* \*

We have covered three issues in this essay: the Chinese official approach to trade in general, the choice of forms and locations, and the practical application of the chosen systems. We can now draw some overall conclusions which will help characterise Chinese contacts with the outside world in the given period.

Those contacts, though dictated by political and military-strategic considerations, did not always function as the Imperial government would have wished. Local economic interest often carried the day.

In the case of the horse and tea trade, the government-regulated exchange was transmuted into its antithesis, becoming a cover for private trade. This was primarily because the government policy of limiting and 'politicising' trade ran counter to the economic interests of the Chinese and Tibetan merchants. The exchange thus became an arena

of confrontation, where a consistent state policy came up against the more spontaneous actions of the Chinese and Tibetan merchants, whose sole motivation was economic. As we have seen, private trade proved strong enough to change the nature of Chinese contacts with the outside world, but its lack of status meant that it was unable to create a system of relationships which would answer to its own interests. The government, on the other hand, had a monopoly on all the means necessary to create any system of contacts it liked, but was incapable of making those systems function as it wished.

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MING POLICY TOWARDS  
THE NÜZHEN  
(1402-1413)

For ten years after the overthrow of the Mongol Yuan dynasty, the new Ming dynasty was too weak to pursue an active policy in Liaodong (now Liaoning province), the region inhabited by Mongols, Koreans, Nüzhen,<sup>1</sup> and other related tribes.

The first reference to contact between the Ming government and the Nüzhen appears in the annals of 1382. The *Ming shilu*'s<sup>2</sup> entry for 25 February reads: 'Suge-temur, a chiliarch of Qinghai, Wanzhe-temur, a chiliarch of Mudaha, and Jiaohua, a chiliarch of Halan of the former Yuan dynasty came from the lands of the Nüzhen to swear allegiance [to the Ming Empire]. They reported that [the distance] from Liaoyang to Fuchuhun was 3,400 *li*, from

<sup>1</sup> The medieval Chinese sources divide the Nüzhen into the cultured tribes—Shu-nüzhi, the uncivilised tribes—Sheng-nüzhi, and the wild tribes—Nüzhi-yeren. The 'cultured' branch included the relatively large Nüzhen tribes which had settled permanently on the outskirts of the Ming Empire; the 'uncivilised' branch lived around the Heilongjiang (the Amur River); and the 'wild' tribes were the small, scattered groupings which inhabited the north-eastern periphery and Primorsky region [v. 7, juan 2, 14b-15a]. Often the sources do not distinguish between the various Nüzhen tribes.

<sup>2</sup> *The Ming shilu*, the official annals of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), runs into hundreds of volumes. It drew on the court archives—diaries of the emperors' deeds and the major court events, reports sent to the court, and Imperial decrees.

Despite the feudal class bias which inevitably limited Chinese medieval historiography, and the tendentious choice of material from the immense Ming archive, this collection of official documents is our most valuable and reliable source for the Ming era.

Fuchuhun to Oduolin 1,000 *li*, from Oduolin to the myriarchy of Tuowen—180 *li*, from Tuowen to the defile of Fosimu—180 *li*, from Fosimu to Huligai—180 *li*, from Huligai to the old defile of Luolang—170 *li*, and from Luolang to Qilielien—190 *li*. Between Fochuhun and Qilielien was the region which they had governed from ancient times' [16, juan 142, 3b-4a].

In April 1383, a former Yuan official in Haixi offered his allegiance to the Chinese authorities in Liaodong [v. 16, juan 153, 6b]. We read, further, that in October 1385 'three Nüzhen, Gaonari, Badu and Tulubuhua, came to Liaodong to announce their desire to swear allegiance to the Ming. They reported that Gaonari was a centurion in the chiliarchy—*qian hu suo*—of Shuyin of the governor-general of Qiguan in the former Yuan [Empire], and that Badu and Tulubuhua were subjects in the chiliarchy of Shilian. [They] had been captured by the wild Nüzhen tribes and enslaved by them. Unable to bear [further] sufferings, they asked permission to settle in Liaodong, in that happy land. And therefore they appealed to the holy [Ming] dynasty to show mercy to them, to give them glass beads, bowstrings and tin alloy to pay [ransom to] the wild tribes [for their relations] and thus free more than 800 families [, which could then] move to Liaodong. When they presented this petition [to the Emperor], he granted Gaonari and the others [an outfit of] clothing each, 500 strings of glass beads, 500 *jin* of tin and 10 bowstrings' [16, juan 175, 3b].

The *Hongwu shilu* tells us that the Dongning *wei*<sup>1</sup> was created on 4 August 1386 [v. 16, juan 178, 5b-6a] and the Nüzhen *wei* of Sanwan was formed on 2 February 1388 [v. 16, juan 187, 7a] and abolished in May 1388 [v. 16, juan 189, 17a].

The *Ming shilu* records also that on 16 January 1388 Agui and five other Nüzhen chieftains were given clothes and paper money and Xiyangha and 133 other chieftains of the wild Nüzhen were granted clothing and silver [v. 16,

<sup>1</sup> In the Ming regular army the *wei* was a unit of 5,600 men and officers. The *wei* associated with the Nüzhen in the *Yongle* period were an entirely different thing. The *jimi-wei*—'a *wei* for binding or shackling strength', as the sources often call these Nüzhen *wei*, is not a military unit but a more or less specific expanse of land. (Serruys calls it a 'commandery'—*trans.*).

juan 187, 6a]. These awards were no doubt connected with the capitulation of Nagachu, the Yuan regent in the north-east, who had operated mainly from the strategically important region of Jinshan, which lay to the west of present-day Changchun and Nongan in the watershed between the Dongliao He and Yitong He.

On 25 January 1388, the Ming court informed the ruler of Korea that the area to the north, east and west of Tieling (near Jiangjie on the Yalu River) was the old territory of Kaiyuan and that the Nüzhen, Dada (Mongols) and Koreans living there now came under the jurisdiction of Liaodong, though the people to the south of Tieling could remain under Korean authority. The frontiers, once settled, 'should be defended and should not permit any encroachment' [16, juan 187, 7b].

In June 1388, a certain Andemishi was sent to Haixi and other areas to 'pacify the "barbarian" peoples' and present them with gifts of clothing [v. 16, juan 190, 6b].

In July 1395, Zhou Xing marched his troops to the Nong and Songhua rivers and sailed to the settlement of Menggushan-zhai and the ancient town of Fudali, to attack Xiyangha. Large numbers of prisoners were taken, but we are not told what happened to Xiyangha [v. 16, juan 239, 1b-2a]. Since the *Hongwu shilu* and *Yongle shilu* mention no other Ming military operations against the wild tribes, we can assume that no more took place.

These are the earliest scraps of information on the relationship between the Ming Empire and the Nüzhen offered by the *Ming shilu* for the *Hongwu* period (1368-1398).

Obviously the Ming dynasty was merely establishing primary relations with the Nüzhen at the time, trying to win over individual Nüzhen chieftains and former Yuan officials in the north-east.

As the Ming Empire stabilised and the fear of attack from outside diminished—in the *Yongle* period (1403-1424)—Ming policy in the north-east became considerably more active.

References to the Nüzhen in the *Ming shilu* are laconic and, more importantly, repetitious. Nothing is said of the principles underlying Ming policy towards them: there are, however, lists of tributary missions sent by individual Nüzhen chieftains to the Ming court and of the Nüzhen *weis*

that were subsequently set up each time; the *Yongle shilu* gives especially full data on the *weis* (see the table below). Yet there are only two brief references to Ming embassies to the Nüzhen, in 1402 and 1405.

The Establishment of Nüzhen *weis*  
and Chiliarchies in the *Yongle* Period  
(1403-1424): A Chronological Table<sup>1</sup>

Date of the Establishment	Wei	Chiliarchy ( <i>qian hu suo</i> )	Source: <i>Ming shilu</i> sect. <i>Yongle shilu</i> , (chapter and page)
1	2	3	4
<b>1403</b>			
11 December	Jianzhou		24,7b
<b>1404</b>			
20 January	Wuzhe		25, 3b
12 March	Nuergan		26, 8a
25 March	Wuzhe zuo		26, 10b
5 November	Wuzhe you, Wuzhehou		31, 7b
17 November		Wuzhe tuo-wen	31, 10a
<b>1405</b>			
19 February	Shilimian, Huerwen		33, 4b
29 April	Sali		33, 13b
30 April		Wenmianchi	34, 1a
6 September		Wuzhe-kuiyemu	37, 2a
14 September	Fushan		37, 2b-3a
19 September	Chibuhan		37, 3a-3b
22 September	Tunhe, Anhe		37, 3b
21 October	Taizhen		37, 8a
25 October	Jianhe		38, 1a
19 November		Hailaer	38, 7a

<sup>1</sup> Since most of the Nüzhen *weis* set up by the Ming existed in name only, it is impossible to identify their exact location. They are, however, significant in that they signalled the establishment of political ties between the Ming Empire and particular Nüzhen tribes.

1	2	3	4
1406			
3 January	Maolin		39, 6b
16 February	Youcheng	Keliti	40, 8b
26 February	Tashan		40, 10b
3 March	Wuyewu		40, 11a
5 March		Hasan, Hala- ha, Gupenhe	40, 12b
13 March	Jiahe, Hami, Gannan	Wudihan	40, 14a
19 March	Talumu, Suwenhe, Asujiang, Supingjiang		40, 14b
1 April	Jihe		41, 7a
13 August	Shuangcheng, Salaer, Yimala, Tuolun, Puyan		44, 12a
13 September	Wulan, Yierguli, Zhamuha, Tuomuhe, Fushan (see 37, 2b)		45, 1b
16 September	Zhamuha (see 45, 1b)		45, 2a
29 September		Shuheerhe	45, 3b
18 October		Zhichen	45, 8b
5 November	Feihe		45, 11a
14 November	Michen, Bulahan		46, 1b
1407			
2 January	Zhatong, Saerhu, Handahe		47, 2a, 3a
22 January	Muluhanshan		47, 8b
20 February	Xiluowenhe, Muyanghe, Halancheng, Kelinghe, Wudihe, Aguhe, Sazhi- lahe, Yimuhe, Yiwenshan, Mulanhe, Azihe, Fulihe	Dedihe, Aoshihe	48, 2b
1 March	Duoerbihe		48, 5a
3 March	Namuhe, Fumenhe	Halumenshan	48, 5a
10 March	Gejihe, Yemuhe, Nalajihe, Yilichahe, Dalahe		48, 5b
6 April	Alashan, Suimanhe, Satuhe, Hulanshan, Guluhunshan		48, 7b-8a
22 April	Kaolangwu, Yisulihe		48, 10b
2 May	Yeedinghe, Buludanhe		48, 12b
1408			
10 January	Xilao		54, 7b
11 February	Tuduhe, Baoshan, Hulujishan, Liemenhe, Mowenhe, Yuanlihe, Zhalatushan, Ouhanhe		55, 3b



1	2	3	4
14 March	Foduotuhe, Ganlanhe, Xieliehe, Xitanhe, Kemoerhe, Azhenhe, Chechahe, Wulixishan, Achimihe, Muhulahe, Qianzhenhe, Tongkuanshan		55, 5b, 6a
4 April	Wuluhanche, Tahanshan, Muxinghe, Yishi, Zhetele- shan, Qihu, Lalu, Yalu, Youtie		55, 12a
21 November	Qitahe		60, 1b
1409			
9 April	Gelin, Bacheng, Zhafcihe, Hushimen, Zhaling, Mujili, Gejihe (see 48, 5b) Nalajihe, Huerhai, Mushuhe, Haotunhe		62, 4a
5 May	Fuliqi, Qileni	Fudahe	62, 9a
21 May	Nuergan dusi		62, 10a
8 July	Futi (Huerhai)		63, 3b
23 September	Aihehe, Bahe		65, 11b
18 October	Hetunji, Shilimu		66, 4a
8 November	Alun		66, 8b
11 November	Tamasu		66, 9b
1410			
6 March	Fuerhe, Shifanghe, Yimahe		68, 6a
13 March	Fayinhe, Wuyinghe, Gumuhe		68, 8b
5 April	Gechengge		
15 December	Xishen		73, 2b
1411			
8 January	Wuliehe, Duoerbihe (see 48, 5a), Muliji, Buluwu, Qitahe (see 60, 1b)		73, 6a
7 March	Duhanhe		74, 7b
1412			
19 September	Zhierman, Wula, Shun- min, Nanghaer, Gulu, Manjing, Haerman, Tating, Yesunlun, Kemu, Fusimu		84, 7a-7b

1	2	3	4
1413			
13 November	Gantuolun (Woduolun)		90, 2b
1414			
27 March	Buhutuhe, Aerwenhe, Kehe		91, 7a
1 April	Gekehe		91, 8b
28 September	Tasuerhe, Wutunhe, Xuancheng, Hebulo, Laohahe, Wula (see 84, 7a-7b), Haerfen, Wulie (see 73, 6a)		93, 9b
1415			
13 January	Shierwuchi		94, 6a
28 November	Huluai, Zhudonghe, Zhazhen, Wusihali		98, 2b
1416			
date unknown	Jianzhou zuo		100, 3a
24 August	Jitan		102, 7a
26 August	Yimahushan		102, 7a
17 September	Zhazhen (see 98, 2b)		102, 9a
1417			
17 March	Yidonghe, Yisuhe		104, 6b
1422			
25 December	Gulu (see 84, 7a)		124, 6b
[24, 73-75]			

Relations between the Nüzhen tribes were consistently hostile, as Wei Huan, a writer of the Ming period, noted: 'The uncivilised Nüzhen of Heilongjiang are constantly in a state of war with the Nüzhen of the mountain villages (the cultured Nüzhen—*auth.*)' [v. 7, juan 2, 15b].

This ceaseless internal conflict and the evidence of the *Ming shilu* would seem to indicate that the majority of Nüzhen chieftains who became voluntary tributaries of the Ming court—thus formally declaring their subjection to the Ming Empire—did so because they wished to enlist Ming support in intertribal feuds.

The paucity of data in our basic source indicates that

the Ming dynasty did not pursue an active policy in the north-east at this stage. The Emperors received the tributary embassies, presented them with silks and other gifts, created *weis* for the chieftains, accorded them various Imperial ranks and titles, but in no way interfered in their internal affairs. We may thus assume that the visits of Nüzhen chieftains to the Ming court were haphazard and purely voluntary.

The admittedly sparse material of the *Ming shilu* gives us good grounds to assert that the initiative in Ming-Nüzhen contacts lay wholly on the Nüzhen side. The Nüzhen derived considerable economic advantage from their relations with the Empire and were therefore more highly motivated to develop them.

Yet, though the widening flow of embassies from the north-east was stimulated by Nüzhen political and economic interest, it is clear that the Ming government, in encouraging this phenomenon and creating the *weis*, also had an aim—the creation of an external buffer zone to protect the Imperial frontiers.

The picture of Ming-Nüzhen relations gleaned from the *Ming shilu* is incomplete since it offers no clues to Ming policy towards their north-eastern neighbours.

Hiroshi Ikeuchi, a Japanese sinologist, has opened up another invaluable source of information on Nüzhen-Chinese relations through his work on the *Lichao shilu* [v. 11; 10]; Henry Serruys in particular is deeply indebted to Ikeuchi's research [v. 24]. In addition, a broad selection of relevant material is offered by *Min dai mammo: shiryô*, a multivolume Japanese publication of the 1950s [v. 14]. These collections of documents throw a new light on Nüzhen-Chinese contacts in the early 15th century, presenting them from the point of view of a first-hand witness—the neighbouring country of Korea.

One may wonder why Korean sources should be less reticent than the *Ming shilu* on this topic. The fact is that the Nüzhen tribes were not just Korea's closest neighbours; many of them had been her longstanding tributaries. She watched jealously as Ming policy began to operate close to her borders. As the Empire's sole rival for the loyalty of the Nüzhen tribes, Korea naturally made an official note of Ming activity in this sphere. The exhaustive coverage in the

Korean annals may also be attributed to the fact that the majority of Chinese embassies to the Nüzhen passed through the Korean capital.

Thus, Ming policy towards the Nüzhen operated within the framework of a constant struggle to wrest the Nüzhen from Korean influence.

The Korean position *vis-à-vis* the Nüzhen was weakened by her status of nominal vassal of the Ming dynasty. Korea's serious misgivings about the Chinese embassies to the Nüzhen and her own ambiguous situation are well illustrated in message sent by the Korean court to Menge-temur and Poyisuo, two Nüzhen chieftains who subsequently became commanders of the Jianzhou left *wei* and the Maolin *wei* (both on the Tumenjiang), which read in part: 'The meaning of the Imperial document carried by Wangkeren (the Chinese envoy—*trans.*) is not to rob you of your territory, but to make you live in peace and occupy yourselves with hunting and [horse] breeding, and we want you to accept the decree with respect and not create any disorder, and thereby avoid giving offence to the Imperial court. Peace should be preserved among you (the Nüzhen—*auth.*). If you do not fulfill these demands, the Korean government will be obliged to petition the Imperial court on your behalf. If you do not obey this order we will send our troops to deal with all disturbances' [10, 153].

The Korean displeasure with Chinese penetration into Nüzhen territory, close as those lands were to the Korean frontier, is clearly reflected in a report made by a Korean official to the King of Korea on 5 October 1406: 'The King is doing his utmost to serve the Ming Empire faithfully[:] however, the [Ming] Emperor's creation of Jianzhou to the east [of the Ming Empire] is equivalent to gripping us by the throat and the right hand; the Emperor creates vassal domains beyond the Korean borders to entice our people, and to us he offers special gifts to lull our vigilance'. [14, vol. 1, 196-197].

The Koreans had every reason to be wary: the number of Nüzhen *weis* and chiliarchies had risen sharply during the preceding period. Twenty-five were created in 1406 alone.

It is interesting that not one of the Ming ambassadors to the Nüzhen was Chinese: they were all Mongol or Nüzhen [v. 24, 57].

The documents published by Ikeuchi show that between 1402 and 1410 Ming diplomacy towards the Nüzhen was consistently aimed at transferring Nüzhen loyalty from Korea to China.

The *Ming shilu* data, repetitious as it is, makes two things absolutely clear: the Ming dynasty was concerned to establish contacts with the Nüzhen, and adopted a deliberate policy towards them. The ultimate aim was not territorial gain, but peace, and hence security, on the north-eastern frontier—and this aim was achieved exclusively by diplomatic means.

The *weis*, each governed by a local chieftain, were a major factor in the Chinese policy of dividing and weakening the Nüzhen. All the Ming efforts were directed towards enticing the chieftains to submit to the Empire—though their 'subject' status was more an agreed fiction than a matter of fact. The large numbers of Nüzhen chieftains who, the *Ming shilu* tells us, visited the Ming court were brought there by Chinese policy, not by individual impulse. Wei Huan, a Ming author, gave a remarkably precise formulation of the essence and aims of Ming policy in the north-east: 'In the early years of the dynasty the eastern "barbarians"—Donghu—were separated into slightly over 300 *weis* [along with] Wuliangha, which consisted of three *weis*; commanders—*dudu*—were appointed to each. This system of government and control—*jimi*—was suggested by the Emperor: if the tribes are divided among themselves they [will remain] weak and [it will be] easy to hold them in subjection; if the tribes are separated they shun each other and readily obey. We favour one or other [of their chieftains] and permit them to fight each other. This is a principle of political action which asserts: "Wars between the 'barbarians' are auspicious for China." The Nüzhen deliver tribute once a year; the three *weis* (Wuliangha)—twice a year' [6, juan 2, 16b].

From the Ming point of view, the *weis* were the most appropriate form of association between the two sides—or, rather, between the Ming Empire and the mass of disunited Nüzhen tribes. The Ming government did its utmost to support and develop the system: by the *Wanli* period (1573-1620) the number of *weis* had risen to 384 [v. 18, juan 7, 31a].

In describing the Nüzhen *weis*, we note primarily that, as befitted their assigned purpose, they were called *jimi weis*—‘*weis* for the binding or shackling of strength’ and that the territory they occupied was never considered part of the Empire.

When a *wei* or chieftaincy—*qian hu suo*—was formed, the Nüzhen chieftains declared their nominal subjection to China by guaranteeing loyalty to the Empire in specified circumstances—in return for considerable political and economic benefits, which accrued to them as a result of their special relationship with China. A commander was appointed to each *wei* and various ranks were distributed among the members of the visiting delegation, according to the recipient’s position in the tribal hierarchy. Gifts—silks, cotton fabrics, clothing, paper money and so on—were also proffered according to rank.

Each commander received a special seal as a gage of his new status. The political position of the tribal elite was, no doubt, significantly bolstered by these seals and the Imperial military ranks awarded them by the Ming dynasty. After the *wei* was officially inaugurated, the Nüzhen involved in it began to send envoys to the Imperial court at regular intervals, usually once a year, in order to deliver the ‘tribute’ which, together with the Imperial ‘reciprocal gifts’ constituted one of the forms of Chinese foreign trade. Naturally this commercial exchange with the Ming Empire was tremendously important to the Nüzhen tribes, and they did all they could to expand it. While in Nanking and during the journey through the Empire each embassy’s expenses were met in full by the Emperor: they received lavish gifts and banquets were arranged in their honour.

We must emphasise that this aspect of the relationship with China was no less an incentive than the seal and the rank of commander, which signified nothing more than the right to ‘command’ territory which in any case belonged to the chieftain’s tribe or clan.

Though space precludes a detailed description of the ‘tribute’-based trade that operated between the Nüzhen and the Ming Empire, we should mention one other important source of income enjoyed by the Nüzhen as a result of their declaration of formal dependence on China. In April 1406, the Ming authorities in Liaodong opened two markets—in

Kaiyuan and Guangning—where the Nüzhen and other north-eastern tribes might come on specified days to sell their horses, which were highly prized by the Chinese [17, juan 41, 4a; 15, juan 6, 4a; 6, juan 2, 12b]. The official value of a quality horse there was eight pieces of *juan* silk and 20 pieces of cotton cloth.

Examining the 'subject' state of the Nüzhen chieftains, we see that the subjection was purely a matter of form, and involved only the 'obligation' of appearing regularly at court with 'tribute'. The chiefs were eager to fulfil this condition in view of the associated advantages outlined above.

The creation of the *jimi weis* had the minimal effect on the sovereignty of the chieftains and the life of the tribes. Chinese influence on the Nüzhen was exclusively cultural—and even that took time to become established and grow.

The Chinese impact on the Nüzhen was so slight because the Ming dynasty left the local leadership system and the tribal way of life intact. 'The local chieftains were ordered to govern their subjects in accordance with their own customs,' the *Huanyu tongzhi* tells us [v. 19, juan 116, 5a-5b].

Our fundamental proof of the weakness of Chinese control on Nüzhen territory is undoubtedly the lack of information about them in the Chinese official sources, which, as Henry Serruys comments, 'would make us believe that internally very little, if any, change was brought about by the creation of the commanderies (*weis*—*trans.*)' [24, 42].

We have seen how much effort and patience the Ming Empire had to expend in order to entice the chieftains into a subject position. But, since the Ming had not won the *jimi weis* on the battlefield, the Nüzhen felt in no way dependent on the Empire, and did not fear it at all, as is clear from descriptions of Nüzhen embassies found in the Chinese sources. The following Imperial decree in the *Ming shilu* is a typical example: 'When [we] send back the Dada and wild Nüzhen who appear at our court, we reward them with gifts. We order all the districts and regions through which they pass to show respect to them.... In transit they often seize people, steal livestock and valuables, [but] when the inhabitants of the [outlying] rural areas see what the Dada and wild Nüzhen are carrying with them, they

confiscate those things. From henceforth [they] should be protected, given an entourage and conducted across the border [17, juan 48, 4a].<sup>1</sup>

And yet the Ming Empire seemed contented with its relations with the Nüzhen: the traditional Chinese foreign policy of 'curbing the "barbarians" with the hands of the barbarians'—a policy which the Ming pursued consistently and energetically—was operating successfully here. However, the Yishiha expedition—the counterpart of Zheng He's expeditions to the South Seas—was sent to the Amur in 1411 in an effort to further boost Ming authority among the Nüzhen [v. 1, 62-65 ff.]. Yishiha was no doubt detailed to leave some mark of his presence in those distant lands: the shipboard personnel list includes the names of several craftsmen and builders—bricklayer, a stonemason, a smith, a sculptor and so on [v. 6, 015].

Yishiha built the Yongningsi shrine—the Shrine of Eternal Serenity—on the Tier cliff, which stands on the right bank of the Amur some 100 kilometres up stream from the sea, and erected a commemorative stela whose inscription—'Ming Yongle shi yi nian qinxu Nuergan Yongningsi ji' (To commemorate the building of Yongningsi shrine on the highest authority in Nuergan in the 11th year of [the] *Yongle* [period] of the Ming [dynasty]—has survived in part. This inscription—translated in full in the appendix to this chapter—is our basic source of information on Yishiha's expedition.

It is to Russian scholars that we owe the discovery and primary investigation of this monument: to M. G. Shevelev, the geologist, and the orientalists V. P. Vassiliyev [v. 2] and V. Panov [v. 4]. The first translation into Russian from the Mongol version was made by A. M. Pozdneyev circa 1898 (a draft translation, since the author's copy of the text was unsatisfactory) and from the Chinese by P. S. Popov in 1905 [v. 6].

Much of the stela is given over to a glorification of the Emperor and his reign—but more interesting from our point

<sup>1</sup> This last sentence reflects not only a desire to protect the Nüzhen but also an attempt to secure the local Chinese inhabitants against Nüzhen raids. Incidentally, Korea, too, often had cause to complain of the behaviour of Nüzhen embassies travelling to and from the Korean court.



of view is the account of Yishiha's expedition, which provides all the basic information and the essential dates. 'Concerning the country of Nuergan, in the north east,' the stela reads, '[it] is situated beyond the bounds of Sanyi. It is inhabited by Jiliemi and also other wild tribes who live in scattered [settlements]. *They all admired the grandeur [of the Ming court], but could not visit [it] themselves....*

*'For this reason the Emperor sent ... [his] envoy to their country ... to disperse their fears and calm [them] (my italics—auth.)....*

*'In the spring of the 9th year of [the] Yongle [period] (1411) [the Emperor]... sent the court dignitary Yishiha with other mandarins at the head of a military force of over 1,000 men on 25 large vessels to visit their domain again. And the directorate of Nuergan was first created....'*

We would point out that the arrogance and bombast of this inscription—typical of the documents of feudal China, especially in the sphere of foreign policy—issues from a sinocentric conception of China, the 'Middle Kingdom' ruled by the 'Son of Heaven', as the hub around which the 'barbarian periphery' revolved. In fact, the inhabitants of those northern areas, the ancestors of several of the smaller Soviet ethnic groups, had long since developed their own independent culture, several aspects of which were later adopted by the Chinese. These attitudes to the 'barbarian periphery' were completely unjustified.

The italicised sections of the above excerpt from the Tier stela throw light on the purpose of the expedition. We also gather from the inscription that Ming couriers had visited the region previously.

The stela tells us nothing about the commanders of the Nuergan directorate or the date of its inauguration. Turning to the *Yongle shilu*, we read in the entry for 12 March 1404 that 'an embassy arrived from the Nüzhen of Hulawen. As a result the Nuergan *wei* was created and four chieftains Baladaha, Alasun and others—were appointed to command it' [*Yongle shilu*, ch. 26, p. 8a].

On 5 May 1409, 65 Dada chieftains—Huladongnu and others—visited the court: the Fuliqi and Qileni *weis* and the Fudahe chiliarchy were formed [v. *Yongle shilu*, ch. 62, p. 9a], and on 21 May 1409, the Nuergan directorate—*Nu-ergan duzhihui shisi*—came into being [*Yongle shilu*,

ch. 62, p. 10a; this data is summarised in the table above].

Yet the *Liaodong shi*, a vital source, asserts that 'in the spring of the 9th year of *Yongle* (1411) Yishiha was again sent with troops on big ships. On arrival in their country, he rewarded those who came to declare allegiance and created the [Nuergan] directorate under three supreme commanders—Kang-wang, Dong-talaha and Wang-zhaozhou—to govern the local population' [12, juan 4, 10b].

The *Huang Ming si yi kao* adds that 'he (Yishiha—*auth.*) gathered together the local chieftains and with the help of appointments and rewards persuaded them to submit. In this connection four chieftains—Dong Wang (Kang-wang of Dongning), Dong-talaha, Wang-zhaozhou and Suoshengge—declared their allegiance along with their people, the directorate was created, the four chieftains became supreme commanders and received *bunchuks* (short staffs decorated with horse-tails, a symbol of authority—*trans.*) and seals' [22, juan 1, 28a].

The *Da Ming huidian* gives 1411 for the foundation of the Nuergan directorate [v. 8, juan 109, 86b].

Henry Serruys, having briefly discussed these conflicting accounts, dismissed the dates given by the *Ming shilu* and *Manzhou yuanliu kao* and concludes that the Nuergan directorate was most likely created in 1411 [13, juan 13, 4a; 24, 43].

It is clear from the *Huang Ming si yi kao* that the Nuergan directorate was structurally identical to the ordinary *Nüzhen weis* set up by the Ming Empire before and after 1411: all power rested in the hands of the local chieftains, no Chinese regents were appointed and no Ming garrison assigned to the area; the chieftains were expected to govern their people and to deliver a yearly tribute of gerfalcons and other locally-obtainable items. In winter the only communication between Nuergan and Liaodong was by dogsled.

We note that the Nuergan directorate was not listed among Ming military protectorates—indeed, that it is never again mentioned in Ming records, although Yishiha returned to Nuergan in 1427 and 1432.

He persuaded the local inhabitants to submit to the Empire by means of compacts, the distribution of ranks and gifts, and lavish entertainments. As the Tier stela tells us: 'In the winter of the 10th year of [the] *Yongle* [period] (1412),

the Emperor ... ordered the court dignitary Yishiha and others to set out for their country. The entire population from Haixi to Nuergan, and also the Kuyi from across the sea,<sup>1</sup> men and women, were presented with clothing and useful items, were given grain, were all regaled with wine and victuals. They were all besides themselves with joy and there was not one who remained stubborn and did not heed [our call].'

The Ming dynasty thus won the allegiance of the locals with little trouble. But shortly after Yishiha's departure the sanctuary with its statue of Buddha was destroyed: Kychanov and Shavkunov interpret this as evidence of the 'true attitude to the attempts of the Ming authorities to subject the Amur tribes to their influence' [3, 644]. Incidentally, neither side resorted to arms during Yishiha's expedition.

Thus the shortlived Nuergan directorate was not a deviation from the general lines of Ming policy towards the Nüzhen and does not run counter to the general Imperial aim of creating as many Nüzhen *weis* in Liaodong as possible.

Several Chinese scholars—notably Xu Zhong-shu, Li Ji (Li Chi) and Jiang Ting-fu (v. 9; 23; 21)—have characterised Yishiha's expedition as a military foray, which established Ming control over the mouth of the Amur and Sakhalin Island and all but annexed these areas to the Empire. This view contradicts the inscription on the Tier stela, which shows clearly that the expedition was not a military undertaking, and certainly not a military invasion of Nüzhen territory, and that it did not aim to conquer and annex the Nüzhen lands. As we have seen, military operations against the Nüzhen simply did not enter the calculations of the Ming policy-makers, since it was much easier for the Ming Empire to achieve its aims through diplomacy than through open coercion. The success of Ming diplomatic initiatives in Liaodong made military solutions superfluous.

Moreover, none of our sources make any mention of military conquest in the north-east, actual subjugation of the Nüzhen tribes or the extension of Ming jurisdiction to

<sup>1</sup> Apparently the Nan, Ult or Ainu. The assertion that they came from 'across the sea' could indicate that these beneficiaries lived on Sakhalin Island.

cover their territories.

The mistaken assessment of contemporary Chinese historians is based primarily on their lack of familiarity with the general principles of Ming policy in the north-east from 1402 to 1413 and their inability to view Yishiha's expedition as an integral part of Ming diplomatic and political activity in the area or to set it against the background of Ming policy overall. Prompted by a nationalist stance, an anti-Russian animus, and a desire to affirm the establishment of Ming influence over lands which it never possessed, they have obviously not examined the source-date on the Yishiha expedition, and least of all the Tier stela, in an objective light.

TO COMMEMORATE THE  
BUILDING OF THE YONGNINGSI  
SHRINE ON THE HIGHEST  
AUTHORITY IN NUERGAN  
IN THE 11th YEAR  
OF *YONGLE* OF THE MING  
[DYNASTY] (1413)<sup>1</sup>

'It is known that the [basic] qualities [of] the sky are elevation and light, and therefore the sky can shelter [all under it]; the qualities [of] the earth are spaciousness and thickness, thanks to which the earth can support [all on its surface]. The qualities of the sage [man] are will and wisdom, thanks to which he can delight those who are close to him and captivate those who are distant, can spread his good deeds far and wide and proffer help to the people.

'Fifty years have gone by since our [Ming] dynasty united the Celestial Empire and peace [began to] reign in it. And the number of eastern and southern barbarians who now come, having crossed the mountains and traversed the sea, to bow the knee at the foot of [our] throne cannot be calculated.

'Concerning the country of Nuergan, in the north east, [it] is situated beyond the bounds of Sanyi. It is inhabited by Jiliemi and also other wild tribes who live [in] scattered [settlements]. They all admired the grandeur [of the Ming court], but could not visit [it] themselves. Besides, in these

<sup>1</sup> Our translation of the Tier stela inscription is from a reproduction of the monument, now preserved in the V. K. Arseniyev Primorsky Local Studies Museum in Vladivostok, which was kindly sent to us by E. V. Shavkunov. The text has been published by Hiroshi Ikeuchi in *Mansen chiri rekishi kenkyu ho koku* (A Scientific Study of the History and Geography of Manchuria and Korea), part 4, Dairen, 1924, p. 321, and in *Jilin tongzhi* (A Description of Girin), 1898, ch. 120, pp. 36a-39a. It contains numerous lacunae, the result of damage done to the stela, which cannot be filled and are indicated by suspension points in the translation.

lands they do not cultivate five kinds of cereal, do not manufacture linen and silk, [but] only breed dogs and wild....<sup>1</sup> To complain ... risking their lives ... to make use of ... objects... The [basic] occupation of the [local] inhabitants is fishing[:] they eat [fish] and dress in [fish] skins. They are skilled in bowmanship. The difficulties [which they experience] in obtaining food and clothing are hard to express in words.

'Therefore the Emperor sent ... [his] envoy to their country... to disperse their fears and calm [them]... are badly distributed.

'In the spring of the 9th year of *Yongle* (1411—*auth.*)<sup>2</sup> [the Emperor] specially sent the court dignitary Yishiha with other mandarins at the head of a 1,000-strong army on 25 large vessels<sup>3</sup> to visit their domain again. And the directorate of Nuergan was first created.... The population in the time of Liao and Jin ... together ... therefore the [basic] occupation ... is similar. Now ... they saw again ... the heavenly ... dynasty. .. the remaining people.... [The Emperor] granted a seal of government, gave clothing ... fabrics, paper money ... in abundance.... With a military [division]... to gather together the people of the former tribes and offer them [the chance] to rule themselves.

'In the winter of the 10th year of *Yongle* (1412—*auth.*), the Emperor ... ordered the court dignitary Yishiha and others to set out for their country. The entire population from Haixi to Nuergan, and also the Kuyi from across the sea, men and women, were presented with clothing and useful items, were given grain, were regaled with wine and victuals. They were all delighted<sup>4</sup> and there was not one who remained stubborn and did not heed [our call].

'... gold... A place was chosen and a ...<sup>5</sup> erected to pacify the people [of that domain], so that they should know respect and obedience ... the people as.... In the autumn of the 11th year (1413—*auth.*) they were soothsaying. To the west of Nuergan lies the [posting] station of Manjing. To the left of that a tall and beautiful mountain rises up. At first

<sup>1</sup> Pozdneyev gives 'deer' here [v. 5, 71]; Popov concurs [v. 6, 014].

<sup>2</sup> Popov gives 1413, which is obviously a misprint.

<sup>3</sup> Pozdneyev has '55 large ships' [v. 5, 71].

<sup>1</sup> Literally: 'they leapt with joy and rejoiced'.

<sup>2</sup> Popov inserts 'shrine' [v. 5, 015].

on its summit there stood a statue of [the bodhisattva] Guanyin.<sup>1</sup> Now a shrine has been built and an elegant and exquisite representation of the bodhisattva has been created, [both] accessible to visitors. And old men, and small children, people who lived near and far hurried in their multitudes, vying with each other.... All spoke ... the magnificence ... henceforth there will be no epidemics and peace [will descend on them].... From ... the most ancient times they have never seen anything like this. The population ... appear with joy and declare that [their] children and grandchildren from generation to generation will [consider themselves] subject [and] will never prove false to [their] intentions.

'The inhabitants of the domains, from all lands of the world (points of the compass—*trans.*) because of the height [where the shrine stands] do not know the meaning of cold and hunger, are happy... and feel grateful.

'When Yao and Shun reigned ... did not extend beyond the bounds ... of the nine regions. But our [holy ruler]... east ... from ... [And] among the barbarian [peoples] from the south, east, west and north, there is not one which has not appeared at court with tribute and has not declared obedience without [our having to use] the strength of [our] weapons.

'In the *Zhong-yong* it is written: "All over which the sky extends, all that is supported by the earth, all that is illuminated by the sun and moon, all on which the frost and dew fall, all that is animate without exception experiences reverence and respect [for the lord]."

'Therefore they say: "[his rule] corresponds to [the will of] heaven" and [verily] that saying can be [wholly] applied to our [lord].... Tirelessly [perfecting himself] in the attainment of [utter] sincerity, equal to heaven.... There is nothing higher ... holly.... Therefore [we must] engrave [it] in characters, so that [it] will remain immortal for thousands upon thousands of years.

"... day of the 9th moon of the 11th year of *Yongle* of the Ming [dynasty] (October 1413—*auth.*)...."

(The inscription also records the names of all those who were connected in any way with the shrine and the

<sup>1</sup> Avalokitesvara, the Buddhist goddess of mercy.

stela: the *wei* governor, the chiliarchs, the garrison commanders, the centurions, the doctors, the site supervisor, the author of the inscription, and the craftsmen who helped create the shrine and the statue—the sculptor, the smith, the brick- and tile-maker, and the stonemason—*auth.*)



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